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THREE DAYS
ON
THE WHITE MOUNTAINS;
BEING
The Perilous Adventure
OF
DR. B. L. BALL
ON
MOUNT WASHINGTON,
DURING
OCTOBER 25, 26, AND 27, 1855.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.



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PREFACE.

THE following narrative of my trip to the White Mountains is induced from the urgent desires of many friends, as well as strangers, to see in print a detailed account for perusal.

This, irrespective of other reasons, would seem to justify the decision to make a small book, and to preclude as unnecessary any apology for intruding myself at this time on the public.

With no claim to literary excellence, I have simply endeavored to narrate correctly the facts which I noted down, as they each day recurred to my mind, during the several months of my confinement to the house.

B. L. B.

THREE DAYS

ON

THE WHITE MOUNTAINS.

PRELIMINARIES.

It was not from choice that I made my trip to the White Mountains in the fall of the year, instead of in the summer. A combination of circumstances seemed so to determine it. Still, early autumn, when the first touches of frost are upon the foliage, will be admitted by all to be an interesting season to visit this, one of the most attractive places of natural beauty in our country.

Perhaps a few words of explanation will tend to make my course better understood, and may not be out of place here.

This excursion I had fixed upon as early as midsummer of 1854. I had then just returned from Europe, and was desirous to compare some of the finest American scenery with that, so highly vaunted, which I had seen abroad. Various engagements, however, interfered; the proper season passed, and I gave up the intention till another year.

The summer of 1855 advanced, and I again looked for a favorable opportunity to carry out my design. But much of

my time was employed in the preparation of my travels, — “Rambles in Eastern Asia,” — and week after week sped away without affording me the desired opportunity. Still later I was detained with the proofs and other matters connected with the publication. Thus time wore away until the month of October had arrived.

At this time I considered it too late, — thinking that the autumnal scenery must have lost its peculiar attractiveness, and that the chill of the weather on the Mountains would render a visit quite undesirable. But, a short time afterwards, in conversation with friends who had visited the mountains, I learned that, although it was rather late, I should probably be repaid for the journey, even should the visit be postponed to the first of November. Accordingly, I resolved to go as soon as it might be practicable.

Time passed; the middle of the month arrived before I found myself at liberty; but there were not sufficient indications of suitable weather, and I preferred not to start until assured of, at least, a prospect of pleasant weather, although then I could not be assured that it would extend to the Mountains.

About this time two friends — Mr. W. Balfour, and Mr. R. P. Napper, formerly travelling companions with me in the Philippine Isles — started on a visit to the White Mountains and Niagara Falls, at which places they proposed to stop to take sketches. They intended to be at the Mountains by the end of the week, and I partially arranged to meet them there.

The twenty-third of October came (I had nearly given

up the idea of a trip this season), promising to be the commencement of continued fair weather. The previous evening, in making a call at the house of a friend, I met Rev. T. Starr King, with whom I conversed respecting the White Mountains at this season of the year. In speaking of their grandeur and beauty, Mr. K. remarked, that, although he had visited them several times, yet he should like to view them in their gray costume of autumn, and in their white robe of winter. I was agreeably impressed, during the conversation, with his description of the scenery; and I also perceived, when I left, that I had, as a consequence, an additional motive in visiting the White Mountains at this season.

In the afternoon of this day the sun shone clear, the air was mild and warm, and I determined to make an expeditious trip. I intended to return on the third day, to be present at the Agricultural Fair, a part of which I wished to attend. I called on my friend, Dr. A. B. Hall, who had expressed a wish to join me in the excursion. His engagements preventing his leaving for two or three days, I returned to my room, and resolved to go alone. Taking a small valise, which had been in readiness some weeks, and making haste, I had barely time, without further information to my friends, to reach the Eastern Railroad station in season to take the half-past two P. M. train.

I had intended, on the way, either going or coming, to visit some friends in Portsmouth; but, no convenient opportunity offering in the intervals of the trains, I continued direct to Portland. On my arrival, which was a little after

dark, I was disappointed in finding no train in continuance for Gorham before the next day, and I remained at the Commercial House for the night.

The following morning I arose early to proceed on my way. My disappointment, however, was still greater than that of the previous night. On looking out of the door, the rain was pouring fast, the air was cold, and thick with fog, giving a dark and gloomy character to the prospect of the day. Had I obeyed a first impulse, I should have returned direct to Boston. But, with the thought that after I was a couple of hours on the way the rain might cease and the sun appear, I decided to proceed to Gorham, feeling that if I should obtain a glimpse only of the Mountains, I could return in the afternoon train better satisfied with my trip.

At eight in the morning we left the station-house for Gorham. During the passage I made the acquaintance of Mr. L. D. Methoot, a young Canadian, the proprietor of a tract of timber-land, and saw-mills, situated on the railroad between Gorham and Montreal. Mr. M. told me that if the weather cleared up, he would accompany me in the excursion on the Mountains.

We arrived at Gorham about eleven A. M., and, the weather proving still unpropitious, Mr. M. concluded to continue his journey.

At the Alpine House, as I entered with the conductor, who makes a short stop there, I inquired,

“Where are the White Mountains?”

“O,” said he, pointing in the direction towards which

the hotel fronted, "they are off there seven or eight miles. You will not be able to see them short of the Glen House, unless this fog clears away. In bright weather they are quite distinct and very pretty from here."

"Very well," said I; "I will go to them, and endeavor to get *some* view of them;" although I thought, before this, that if I succeeded in seeing the Mountains from this place, and the weather continued stormy, I should return home.

Engaging a horse, no carriages being at hand, I set off at twelve, on horseback, with my valise in front of me, and my umbrella raised to shield me from the rain.

Following the only road, which wound along on the bank of a pretty mountain stream, whose waters whirled rapidly over a rocky bed, I very much enjoyed the ride, though it was in the rain; and, as my attention was occupied with the woods on both sides, in which trees were lying in different directions, as they had fallen torn up by the roots, mingled with large rocks standing in strange positions, the way seemed not long or tedious.

Arriving at the Glen House, which is situated at the base of the Mountains, I observed that the atmosphere was a dense mass of fog. I disposed of the horse temporarily at the stable, with the intention of making a stop of a half hour, and then returning.

On entering the hotel, I met the proprietor, Mr. Thompson, and, after inquiring for my two friends, and ascertaining that they had not been here, as I dried my clothes by the fire I engaged in conversation.

"The Mountains are not now to be seen, I presume?"

"No, sir; you will not probably be able to see them to-day. At all events, not till after the weather has cleared up."

"I am somewhat disappointed, as I came over from Gorham with the belief that I might be able to get some kind of a view; but, after all, the prospect is that I shall have to return without it."

"Why, sir, I cannot say how it may be to-morrow, but to-day the prospect is very slight, I assure you."

"The weather is rather changeable here, is it not, sir?"

"Yes, sir; it is always more or less so; and at this season we expect many changes. Sometimes the Mountain is clear for days, and then it is covered with clouds. Again, one may observe that it is perfectly clear on the summit, with the sun shining brightly, and in ten minutes afterwards the clouds will have shut down and enshrouded every part. Mount Washington is particularly subject to this variableness, and little dependence can be placed on it at any time."

"Is there no way, then, that I can contrive to get a slight view of the Mountains before returning?"

"None, that I am aware of, in this state of the weather. It is as you see; the Mountains are entirely excluded from sight by the clouds and fog. This may last an hour, or days."

"Yes, sir; I observed, as I came up to the house, there was nothing to be seen beyond a short distance from the house, which reminded me somewhat of a lone island in the midst of a fog at sea."

"You might walk up on the new road a piece, if that would be any satisfaction."

"The new road — what is that?"

"It is a carriage road, which is being built by a New York company, so that people may ride all the way up, in vehicles, on a smooth Macadamized road to the summit, and with seats made level, which will remain the same in ascending or descending."

"Yes, sir; I suppose I can follow the road easily enough?"

"O yes, there is no difficulty about that. You can see it here from the window. There it is, just at the foot of the hill, crossing that bridge, and entering the woods a little beyond. You cannot discern it far. If there was no fog it could be seen to the Camp House and the Ledge, which is as far as it extends at present."

"What am I to understand by the Camp House? The Ledge, I presume, is a ledge of rocks?"

"The Camp House is a small one-story building for the use of the workmen on the road. It is about four miles from here, or about half way to the summit, and is situated at the foot of the Ledge. The Ledge is a kind of high bluff, with a steep and somewhat precipitous face, covered with boulder-like stones of different sizes. At one part a path leads up and over the top. This is called the bridle-path, and is the one used by visitors in making the ascent to the summit either in walking or on horseback."

"Very well, sir; I think I will take a walk up the carriage road, and be satisfied with a survey of that."

To this Mr. Thompson answered: "You will find nothing in your way there; but I would by no means attempt to go to the summit. It is too late in the day, besides you could see nothing for the clouds."

"O, no!" I answered, "I shall not wish to go further than the Camp House, should I even go as far as that."

As the wind was yet blowing, by permission from Mr. T. I exchanged my hat for a cloth cap, which I saw hanging in the room; and, as it continued to rain, I took my umbrella and walked out.

Crossing the bridge a little below the house, I came upon the new road, and soon lost all trace of the house in the fog. The freshly broken stones were loose and untrodden as they had been left by the workmen, and the walking was rough and wet, but was tolerable, by selecting the path at one side. The road uniformly takes a considerable rise in the grade, and makes long sweeps, in a zigzag course, to the right and left, and is enclosed on both sides by forests of fir, beech, and other wood. On the way I noticed several deserted and weather-beaten camp-houses, where, in an emergency, a person might make a tolerable night's lodging.

Although the rain fell fast, the air here was pure, cold, and invigorating, and I felt stimulated to continue my walk, which seemed to produce scarcely any fatigue. From the newness and novelty of the road, there was something on either side to attract the eye, and the time passed almost imperceptibly. I walked pretty fast, and in between one and two hours I was surprised to find myself so soon at the end of the road, and at the foot of the Ledge.

The Camp House I had passed, leaving it on my right some fifty rods behind, and, by its proximity to the Ledge and its nearness to the end of the road, I recognized it as being the one spoken of by Mr. Thompson. Casting my eyes to the top of the Ledge, and reflecting a few moments, I concluded, as it was not very high, that I should not be violating very much the advice of Mr. Thompson if I went to the top.

Unable to discover a path, I clambered lightly and rapidly over the rocks, not a little fearful that, if I loosened one, the whole mass, from the highest to the lowest, would be in motion beneath my feet. This was accomplished, however, without much difficulty; but at the top I found the view narrowly limited by the clouds, and quite unsatisfactory. Perceiving higher land beyond, I started for it. The wind was chilling, and the rain froze as it fell, forming a thickness upon my clothes and umbrella, and a crust on the snow, through which my feet broke at each step.

The snow was about twelve inches deep, and very fatiguing to walk upon. Having continued for about an hour, the distance seeming to be scarcely lessened, I turned to retrace my steps. Darkness gathering around, I ran with the best of my speed, and passed quickly over the ground, with not unfrequent falls, from the accumulating weight of ice, and the slippery stones hidden beneath the snow. The darkness having rapidly increased, it was with difficulty that I could discern my tracks; often I could only make my way by feeling the indentures in the broken crust. At last, as I had begun to fear I had lost my course, the

Ledge suddenly appeared at my feet below me. I descended the rocks by sliding from one to the other, scarcely able to see them, but without accident, further than several times being caught by my feet, and obliged to pull myself up and back again, in extricating myself from among the ice-clad rocks.

Arriving at the door of the Camp House, I met the occupant, Mr. J. D. Myers, and two others, and was at once made welcome. I was completely encased with ice, and chilled through with the cold. My coat being hung up to dry, shoes taken off, stockings wrung out, and a dry pair substituted, I sat down, and enjoyed the warmth of a blazing fire. Coffee was then made, and, with food, set before me; it seemed as if the kind-hearted Mr. Myers could not do enough for me. The evening being very dark, cold and stormy with rain, I accepted the hospitable invitation to remain until the next day.

A comfortable night was passed, though, with the wind blowing hard, and a heavy, pelting rain falling upon the roof and sides of the house, my mind was full of thoughts that admitted not of sleep.

THE FIRST DAY.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25TH.

THE morning dawned. Little did I contemplate, as the first streaks of light peered through the window over my couch, that the evening shadows of that day would close around me, a lost and bewildered traveller, amid the terrifying solitude of the mountain-top, having for my shelter only a lair of rocks and frozen snow, and there to pass the night alone.

It was not, however, with any determination of attempting to climb the Mountain, that I arose and walked out to view the prospect. The weather had softened; the clouds which yet hung over the Mountain now gave but little rain, and seemed likely to break away. The bridle path ascending the Ledge was pointed out to me in front of the house, free of snow, and, no obstacles seeming to be in the way, I could not resist the thought of making a short trip over the Ledge. I remembered the conversation with Rev. Mr. King the evening before my departure, and his advice to take a guide, etc. But here there are no guides, — none certainly within four miles, and perhaps not so near as that. The rain of the last night has freed the path of snow. I can at least go on as far as I went yesterday, and, if there is nothing in the way, I may be able to continue on even to the summit. Besides, I am

already half way up the Mountain. It is only four miles from here, and I should be able to return by noon even from the summit; for it is called only four hours' ride up and back from the Glen House, and this is but half the distance. Returning by noon, I can take the cars in Gorham to Portland to-night, and be in Boston to-morrow forenoon, a half day beyond my time. The difference will not be great. I am already on the ground. A convenient opportunity may not present another season. The present time is always the best.

Having regarded the subject in this light, I remarked to Mr. Myers that I thought I would make a short trip up the Mountain.

"Do you think so?" said he; "what, up to the summit?"

"As to that, I cannot say. I shall, no doubt, have to be governed by circumstances there."

"Well, it isn't a very good time to go. You'll find it pretty cold up there. Still, there is a good path all the way, if there is no snow. I don't know as there will be any great difficulty. But I wouldn't stay to be out after dark. You have heard of the lady who lost her way one day last month on the summit, and died there,—she and her party being out all night?"

"Miss Bourne you refer to, I presume?"

"Yes, Miss Bourne, from Kennebunk. She was a beautiful lady. I saw the party when they passed here. They were all in such good spirits, so lively, talking and laughing! I knew it was too late in the afternoon for them to go, and I tried to prevail upon them to stop here over

night, and then to proceed on in the morning; but they were determined to go. It was a sad sight when they brought her over the Ledge,—the day before so full of animation, tripping along so gayly, and then to see her form so lifeless, and all so changed and sorrowful! I pitied the whole party from the bottom of my heart. But I learned she did not die from cold, but from fatigue and general exhaustion, and without suffering. I believe they said she had some difficulty of the chest. It seemed hard that they could not find the Summit House when they were so near,—but forty rods,—and the gentleman accompanying them even went within twenty rods.”

Mr. M. spoke so feelingly of the misfortune, that I could not but realize a profound sympathy for them; and, with my limited time, I could not delay as long as I should like to have done.

I sat down to the table, with scarcely any appetite, and drank a bowl of coffee, and eat a few mouthfuls of food, which satisfied me. I then exchanged my shoes for a pair of Mr. M.'s stout thick boots. These were much too large, but I at last concluded to wear them rather than the shoes. It continuing to sprinkle, I took my umbrella, and, thanking Mr. Myers for his kindness, started out. Looking around for a stick that would serve for a staff, Mr. M. said:—

“Ah, here, take this cane. It is one I cut on Mount Washington, and I'll make you a present of it. Should you see any bears in your way, let me know, and I will come up with my gun.”

"*Bears!*" said I; "you do not mean to say that there are bears at that height?"

"Sometimes there are. We frequently see their tracks about."

"Very well," said I; "I hope not to meet a *hungry* one. But if I see any I will endeavor to let you know."

Entering upon the path, which was a rough and stony one, I ascended the steep side with little fatigue, and in half an hour reached the top of the Ledge. The view, however, was but little more extensive than at the foot of the Ledge.

Beyond me, for the distance of a quarter of a mile, or a little more, the ground gradually ascended. Its uneven surface was covered with rocks, and patches of snow not wholly carried away by the rain. Further than this the landscape was obscured by misty clouds hanging close upon the earth. I then turned around to obtain a view off and below the Ledge. But not the Glen House, nor the road, nor a mountain, could be seen; only the Camp House, with a small thicket of fire-killed trees and brush around. All else was screened by fog.

Starting on again, I directly came to the path where I recognized my footsteps of the night before. And my surprise was not a little on perceiving the large footprints of a bear, which had apparently followed along after me in the descent. His enormous feet in many places had completely annihilated my own tracks. I stepped back to the Ledge, to give the information to Mr. M., and succeeded in making my voice heard at the Camp House, and then went on, observing the animal's tracks for a mile, when they disappeared among the

rocks. I kept a good lookout, in case he or his companions were hovering about. Several times *I saw one* some distance ahead; but, on coming up, it invariably proved to be a black rock.

Here the path was no longer discernible, and so gradually did it lose itself among the snow and rocks that I could not detect its termination; but, on looking back, I could make it out by the less buried stones at its sides. The surface now was uniformly covered with snow to the depth of eight or ten inches, and nothing to be seen but black rocks, of every size, shape, and dimension, singly and in piles, scattered around on all sides; and I continued on, following the rise of the land. I brought to mind that I had heard that the Mountain between the Camp House and summit was made up of four eminences or peaks, called mountains, and that Mount Washington constituted the fourth and the last.

Having passed the FIRST MOUNTAIN, the way was more difficult and wearisome. My feet broke through the crust at each step, and gave much pain to my ankles. Sometimes they were caught and held fast between the hidden rocks, and required some labor to extricate them. I endeavored to select the best course, and, wherever the way was impassable or difficult, I retraced my steps, or made circuits, trying at different points until I succeeded in getting beyond them, although it made much more travel than would have been necessary could I have gone in a direct line or by the path. However, I did not regard this as a real obstacle, and did not think of returning, especially as I observed that the clouds occasionally broke away, revealing the blue sky, which might at length

render the Mountain clear. I thought it very likely that I might continue on to the summit, though I should have to allow myself more time than would be consistent with my getting back to the Camp House by noon.

It was between the SECOND and THIRD MOUNTAINS that I began to perceive the air disagreeably cold. The rain had changed from sleet to hail, and lastly to snow. The wind had increased, so that I closed my umbrella and used it as a walking-stick; and the snow fell fast, limiting the view to a small extent around me.

Once, while disengaging my feet from among rocks in a pit of snow, into which I had sunk deeper than before, the difficulty that I experienced, together with the cold, suggested a thought of returning. I was aware that, in the present state of the weather, if I should reach the summit, it could be of no advantage; still, if I was there, I could make use of any opportunity that might occur. But at this moment the clouds opened and disclosed a portion of elevated land nearly ahead, when it was again immediately obscured. Yes, thought I, there is the THIRD MOUNTAIN, and not more than fifteen minutes' walk from here. I will keep along yet, and reach it.

I marked well the direction in my mind, and then pressed forward. Enveloped in an atmosphere of snow, the ground very variable, with rocks and steeps, I could not adhere to my course; and, with numerous turnings, travelling to and fro to find my way, it seemed to me that I must have gone many times its real distance, and that the time occupied was much longer than I had expected.

The summit of the THIRD MOUNTAIN was at length reached;

but from which side I could not know, and in what direction lay the land beyond was equally as difficult to determine. But three-fourths of the distance I knew was accomplished. I looked at my deep footprints, and saw that they would not be soon filled, and that I should be able to follow them back when I chose to return. Besides, I had taken the precaution several times to place two stones together upon the top of a large rock, in such a manner that I could recognize them as my guide-marks.

Leaving here, I made my way down by a gradual slope, and then over uneven places, ascending and descending. I was guided in the direction I took only by a glimpse now and then of a black rock, sometimes ahead, then upon the right or left.

The air was piercing cold. The wind blew with violence. The snow was wafted in clouds around me. The storm was difficult to face, and I could see but a little way in any direction. I stopped, and debated within myself whether I should go on. The storm can only be regarded as a sudden squall, I said. I shall expect in a half hour to see it dissipated. A single half hour will, no doubt, be sufficient to enable me to gain this last summit. The distance can hardly be more than half or three-quarters of a mile; and, once at the summit, I shall find a comfortable shelter.

There, I had been told, one of the two houses is left the whole year so that it can be entered at any time by the unfortunate, yet fortunate, traveller who may happen to be within its reach. And for his comfort he may find stored for use food and drink, conveniences for fire, with wood and

matches, lamps, clothes and bedding for the night, — an arrangement reflecting much credit on the part of the proprietor. It is to be regretted, however, that, against such a noble desire to afford relief and succor to the distressed, must be set the fact that some thankless individuals have, on one occasion, visited the house, and, after regaling themselves, broken and strewn about the furniture, and made wasteful disposition of the provisions laid up in abundance.

But should I turn back, thought I, and the storm in an hour leave the Mountain free and clear, I should feel much dissatisfied for having allowed a slight obstacle to thwart my purpose and deprive me of an opportunity which may not occur again for years.

Had I, while travelling in other countries, yielded to opposing difficulties, I should have lost some interesting sights, which I should never have regained. For example, in crossing the Bernese Alps, had my companion and myself been discouraged by the depth of the snow, through which, with wearied steps, we were wading, we should have missed some of those beautiful landscapes so characteristic of the Alpine scenery. If, against the protestations of guides, we had not persisted in climbing the snowy peak of a lofty group of mountains near the Bains de Loeuk, in Switzerland, where we beheld below us on every side a wide-spread forest of almost innumerable gray peaks, diminishing gradually to mere fine points in the distance, we should have been deprived of one of the most striking and majestic panoramic views of nature in Europe. And I should never have witnessed the grandest specimen of volcanic scenes, had it not been for persevering to the third

time in the attempt to ascend the cone of the Marapee, in Java, in spite of the assurances of the natives that it was impossible; that by "birds only had it been visited, and that it would prove fatal."

The obstacles here did not seem really insurmountable, compared with those of other places which I have visited; and I concluded that, to turn back at this stage of the journey, would be attended with more fatigue, and longer exposure, than to complete the short distance which it could be to the summit. It is true, I could have wished the inspiring society of a companion. But I must proceed alone; and on I went, with renewed energy, buffeting the more furious storm.

I walked as fast as my partially benumbed limbs would permit over uneven land, climbing piles of craggy rocks, and at length found myself on more regular, but abruptly rising ground. My feet, hands and face, ached with the severe cold. I could see little where I was going, but I pressed on, now in one direction, then in another, as best I could make out a course a few rods ahead. Warmth I endeavored to restore to my body by energetic action; often stopping and turning round, and thrashing my arms around me. My swollen hands I could in some measure protect by changing them alternately into my pockets. Many times, in a struggle for superiority with the wind, was I thrown to the ground. It was the hardest storm I ever encountered, the most difficult to contend with, and the cold was the most severe I had yet endured, believing it to be not less than ten or twelve degrees below zero of Fahrenheit.

As I toiled on, I experienced an unusual pain in the bones of my face, and, putting up my hand, found the face completely encompassed by a body of ice. It was formed of the snow melted into my whiskers, and congealed into a solid mass. A row of icicles, two inches in length, had formed around the visor of my cap. My eyelashes were filled with icy globules, which had frequently to be broken to enable me to see. I considered the aspect of affairs to be somewhat desperate, and looked back.

But, no, thought I, the summit must be near, and, after so long a time and so much labor, I will not turn yet. At the Summit House I can make myself comfortable; and the storm is too violent to continue long, especially so early in the season as October. Thoughts of this nature passed through my mind, and, holding to my resolve, I said to myself,

"I will still try for the Summit House!"

I believe I have always accomplished what I have undertaken, when really determined. And yet this seems an exception, for there are circumstances over which I can have no control. I had left the Camp House to go on or return, as appearances might seem to favor. Still, as I was already half way up the Mountain, I had a desire to go to the summit, and felt somewhat impressed that I might do so.

Now I was struggling on with not very encouraging results, but with a strong hope as I reminded myself that I was on some part of the FOURTH MOUNTAIN. Had there been another to be climbed in this state of things I should

have precipitately turned about and abandoned further effort. I reconciled myself that each step forward was so much gained, although, in gaining that step, often several were lost backward, which seemed to me like fighting for every advance I made.

The storm, instead of abating, appeared to increase. Sheets of snow one after the other rapidly descended, not in light feathery flakes, but in hard crystallized grains, volleys of which, as they struck the eyes, were painfully blinding. The only way they were to be endured was to bend the head low, or to face entirely around.

I took advantage of each slight interval of the gusts to plunge forward with the aid of my cane. Constrained in my movements by one hand under my coat, to prevent it freezing, I was more than once thrown to the ground, with my hands immersed in the frosty snow.

At length, after upwards of an hour's painful exertion between the third and fourth Mountain, I came suddenly upon comparatively level ground. Breathless, with my whole frame shaking with cold, I could not but congratulate myself on my success; and, as I saw no other land rising before or around me, I exclaimed, in an audible voice, but which was instantly swallowed by the vortex of winds,

"Mount Washington at last — and here is the Summit!"

I could not have believed that the storm could be more violent than it had been. Yet here it was more furious than ever. But how to describe it I know not. It now had the full sweep of the mountain-top, the highest point of the whole group, of the loftiest mountain for hundreds

of miles around. If ten hurricanes had been in deadly strife with each other, it could have been no worse. The winds, as if locked in mortal embrace, tore along, twisting and whirling, and mingling their roaring with the flinty rattling of the snow-grains in one confused din. But I again flattered myself, as sometimes at sea, "it is indeed a severe squall, but it will soon be over."

It was with extreme difficulty that I could keep on my feet. I braced myself with my cane, and, stooping, held with one shoulder to the blast; then, as it veered and forced me round, I presented the other, all the time scarcely able to catch my breath.

The cold was intense, and respiration was becoming laborious. I must reach the Summit House soon! I cannot long stand still! And yet in what direction shall I go?

Clearing my eyes of the icy globules, I charge forward, now to the right, and then to the left. But I can see nothing. Again I hold, and again I plunge forward in the slight intervals of the blasts. And then, restricted by my freezing hands momentarily thrust in my pockets, I am thrown down and nearly suffocated in the dense volumes of rising snow before I can regain my benumbed limbs.

Now at one side I perceive a darker shade upon the thick atmosphere. If it is the Summit House I shall be happy. With all my strength I succeed, after several falls, in reaching it. But it turns out to be a large rock. There is a small pyramid of stones piled upon the top. Some one must have placed them there. Is it not a beacon-guide to the house? But it may be the monument of the unfor-

fortunate lady who died here. And, if it is, the Summit House is near. How much better can I now realize the difficulty of her situation!

Crouching beside the rock, I endeavored to peer into the whirling clouds of snow; but I was only blinded in the attempt.

But this cold chills me through. I must find the house, or I shall perish. Again I glide out, and combat the pelting storm. I grope in different directions, but with no better success. I fall upon my knees, and press my hands for warmth between them. My head I hold low to shield my face. But it will not do to remain still, and, rising, I thrust myself forward.

The storm pours down as if I was the only object of its wrath, and as if avenging itself for some unknown offence. Blasts of the confused elements grapple each other, in rapid succession, and envelop me in commingled sheets of impenetrable snow. The wind, encircling me with its powerful folds, presses the cold to my very vitals, colder than the coldest robe of ice. Now it wrests me from my feet; again, it carries me furiously before it, and I sink down in fear that it will hurl me over an unseen precipice. For a few moments I remain to breathe and to rest. Shall I retreat, or shall I persevere? for I am freezing.

Springing upon my feet, I set off in other directions, trying to discern the house. There is a dark shade to the left. Gaining it, it proves to be a long oval heap of rocks, and I crawl to the top, to get a view, if possible.

With difficulty I cling to them. My eyes are strained to every side, endeavoring to penetrate the fierce deluge of driving snow. Everywhere it is the same; not a dark shadow, even, to indicate a building.

But I must retreat; and yet, so near, I cannot. This freezing cold will be fatal. My breath is short, and goes and comes with labor. O, that I could get *one glimpse* of the Mountain, and for *one* moment only, that I might see where I am—that I might have the least idea of the place—of its form—its extent, to determine me!*

* Since my escape from the Mountains, a gentleman who had visited Mount Washington told me that, although the two houses at the summit are not five rods apart, his friend, one morning, lost his way in going from one house to the other, and was brought back by the guide who went in search of him.

Another instance Mr. Noyes, publisher of Rev. Mr. Wiley's interesting "Incidents of the White Mountains," related to me. Mr. N., one cloudy morning, was standing in the door of the Summit House, when he thought he heard the footsteps of some one approaching. He listened, and soon discerned in the fog the form of a man. He watched him, and saw him pass the house. Thinking the man might be wrong, he followed, and, on coming up, spoke to him.

"Which way are you going, sir?"

"*Going?* I am going to the Summit House, if I can find it."

"How far do you expect to travel to reach it?" inquired Mr. N.

"Well, I don't know. I have been tugging on for the last hour, expecting to find it. They told me it was only a few miles along; and I should think I had already been travelling fifteen!"

"But the course you are on now," said Mr. N., "will take you over the other side to the Crawford House. You have already passed the Summit House." And the man was led back, astonished to find he had passed one house ten rods from the path, and the other but six.

And yet, perhaps, I am mistaken. This Mountain may be the third, instead of the fourth. I may have counted one that is not reckoned as a Mountain, in which case, the summit is beyond, and still unreached. How one ray of sunlight would illumine the whole, and dispel all doubts and obscurities! Here there is no path, no object, nothing to mark the way. How simply could all these rocks have been made to subserve the use of guide-posts, and remain, as enduring as the Mountain itself, to conduct one to the summit! Unwilling to give up until more convinced of some error, I determined to persevere a little longer. Having made my way carefully over and down the rocks, I sought in yet other places for the Summit House, guarding myself against being carried too far by the terrible blasts. But my feet and hands were frozen, and my body so benumbed that I was pitched and thrown about upon the stones with very great violence; and the snow particles struck with such force that they penetrated the skin, causing the blood to start from my hands. Unable to see but a few feet from me, I sought, and sought in vain!

With no encouragement from my efforts, I seated myself beside a rock, slightly sheltered, to rest and to consider the best course to pursue, hoping, in the mean time, that the storm would break, and reveal the Summit House, or enable me to see a safe way down, by which I might return.

How long I remained here I cannot say. I presume it was but a few minutes. I recollect the reflection that I had battled with the elements for several hours, and that, as there was little prospect of the storm abating, it would

be useless to continue longer. Afterwards I felt cold streams running through me from the rock, and my head had sunk upon my breast. Then it seemed as if I had become a part of the rock itself, and riveted to the ground; and I was made aware of an indescribably happy sensation stealing over me — of sleep! I did not wish to move; my whole inclination was to indulge, at least, for a short time. But a second thought, of the consequences — *once lost in sleep would be to wake no more!* — aroused me. Raising my head with considerable exertion, I arose upon my stiffened limbs, divesting myself of the snowy accumulation. Inclining upon the rock, I once more turned my eyes, screening them with my hands, to every side, carefully scrutinizing every foot of the view around me. But the driving waves of snow completely encircling the spot could be penetrated a short distance only.

“*Once more!*” said I, as I thought of the several hours’ travelling back to the Camp House. “Once more let me try.” And, urged by a last hope that I might by accident discover the Summit House, I sallied forth, reeling and staggering with my weakened limbs, and less able to buffet the storm. I, however, soon returned. Everywhere the land seemed to descend, indicating that it was the summit of *some* mountain, or *some* peak, but affording no clue or trace to the object of my search.

It now came for me to reluctantly consider the proper course for making my way back. I say reluctantly, for it was hard to abandon the project under the belief that the comfortable Summit House was so near. I had hoped, at

last, to find a shelter, to rest, and to refresh my body with warmth, and, remaining until the storm was over, to start anew. A little before this I had thought I could not possibly hold out longer; but now, tired, faint, weary, exhausted, chilled and benumbed, without any respite, I must go all the way back. I must force my frozen feet to move, or sink with the cold upon the ground. The prospect did indeed look somewhat discouraging.

Judging it to be near the middle of the afternoon, I considered that there was no time to be lost. I hastened to find the track of my footsteps, to follow it back. This was so irregular, crossing at various places, lost at times by bare spots of the ground, again partially obliterated, that so much time was consumed in the search, with my strength rapidly failing from the cold, I believed it more prudent to abandon it entirely; and I set off making the descent, guided solely by the fall of the land. The wind charged furiously behind, enveloping me in volumes of snow. Frequently, as I was driven onward, I was obliged to clutch the rocks for some minutes, to prevent being precipitated down the declivitous places. With all my care to guard myself against the sudden gusts, I could not avert falls and consequent bruises from the hidden stones.

I had not proceeded a great distance, when my attention was drawn to a stake standing upright a few inches above the snow. I pressed along, wondering how it ever came in such a desolate place, and saw others. I then observed that they were at regular distances apart,—forty or fifty feet. Believing they had been placed for some particular

purpose, I endeavored to attach some importance to them as being in some way connected with the Summit House. Then, from the unevenness and irregularity of the surface, seeing that they could be of no use there, and noticing that one was always lower than the other, I came to the conclusion that they were bounds left in laying out a road to the summit. In this I was more confirmed, as I remembered I had heard that a road was in contemplation all the way to the peak of Mt. Washington.

At first I thought I would turn and trace them up, presuming that they might lead me to the Summit House; but the doubts of their extending all the way, my exhaustion, the facing of the storm, the toiling ascent, my benumbed limbs, the terrible, piercing cold, and lateness of the day, outweighed all other considerations. I will not risk anything more *upward*. No, it shall henceforth be *downward, downward*. I will follow these stakes wherever they may lead, if it is only *downward*. I shall certainly find the weather more endurable below, at whatever part it may be; and wherever footsteps have been to place the stakes, I can most assuredly follow.

On I went, with as long and rapid strides as the thickness of the snow, nature of the ground, and my own strength would permit. Often the course, by its sudden changes to the right or left, or hidden by the uneven surface and rocks, was lost, and as often I was obliged to retrace my steps, searching upon every side, and losing time in my endeavors to recover it.

Frequently difficult places, steep and rocky, had to be crossed, as the liability of passing the stakes in going around

rendered it necessary. Generally the next stake could be detected from the one behind; but, when delays occurred in searching for them, the opportunity was made use of to prevent my hands freezing by rubbing, or pounding, or holding them within the folds of my coat upon some less chilled part of my body. In this manner I continued along the zigzag course, descending, and enshrouded by the snowy atmosphere, without the knowledge of whither or upon which side of the mountain my steps were bending.

At length a patch of thick, stunted brushwood appeared before me, assuring me that I was down to the line of vegetation. This was made up of hard-seasoned, winter-killed shrubs, with sharp-pointed limbs branching out in every direction like entangled deers' horns. It seemed impenetrable to human footsteps; and, what was worse, in the midst of it I had lost the stakes, and they were nowhere to be seen.

Searching on every side, and not finding them, I returned to those last passed. Taking their range in a straight line, I plunged into the brush, avoiding the limbs this way and that; now stepping over, now under, and then around, and disengaging myself on one side, then on the other, from their seraggy points. At length one was discovered nearly buried in the snow, but from that no other could be detected. Vainly did I seek them in every direction, for upon them my hopes indeed would depend. Could it be that here they terminated? Stopping a few moments to consider, I was for the first time startled by observing that the shades of night were gathering around. What am I to do? Which way shall I go? What now have I to rely upon to guide me in this barren

waste, in the midst of this storm, and soon in darkness? I will continue *downward*, and in any course where I shall be able to thread my way, for I know not which side of the mountain I am on.

With little delay I was hurrying on through the brush, now over a bed of stones, around the rocks here and there, and endeavoring to shun the entangling shrubs. My progress much impeded by the various obstacles, my clothes rent, the darkness increasing, at length I could see but a few steps around me. The wind, in spite of my exertions, drove me several paces forward, and often nearly headlong over the stones, and I caught the branches and held with my hands for fear of being hurled over some supposed precipice in front of me.

Again I stopped for reflection. And now the full conviction of my position came upon me. "My God!" exclaimed I, "am I to pass the night here?" Much exhausted in strength, my whole body was trembling with cold. Darkness was closing in. A snowy bed, unsheltered from the piercing blasts, my only couch, awaited me. Is it possible to survive this? But I am alone. I feel that I am fast freezing. My own exertions are all I have to depend upon. I must hasten for a shelter, where I can rest a few minutes from the cold, and think what course I am to pursue.

A sudden gust here wrested me from my feet, and threw me on the ground. I sprang up and hastened to look for a rock, a hole, a bank, anything for a shelter. But nothing of the kind could I discover. Halting upon a flat rock, and, casting my eyes around me, I discerned a small recess between it and a patch of low firs. Taking possession, and crouch-

ing down, I slowly spread my umbrella, and raised it over me, carefully keeping the circumference below the firs from the wind. Now for something to hold it. Thrusting my hand into the snow, it came in contact with a strong root, bent up, as if it had grown for the purpose, and, resting the handle of the umbrella against it, I fastened it with a small cord, though with difficulty from my benumbed hands.

After a little rest, during which I felt strongly inclined to sleep, I returned to the upper side of the rock to perfect my habitation. With all my remaining strength I set to work pulling up the tough bushes by the roots, and piling them upon the umbrella, to protect it from the wind; and I attempted to extend the covering in front, but the crooked branches effected very little for the object. During the process I exerted all my energy, with the view to quicken the circulation of the blood and to restore warmth to my body. But the cold, by the force of the wind, penetrated like water, and conducted off the heat as rapidly as it was generated; and I was reminded of the fact that a person can endure a greater degree of cold, and that much longer, when sheltered from the wind, than when exposed to it. The sides of my camp I battened in with crusts of snow and with the tops of the firs which I could twist off. This operation was very slow and painful, as the branches were frozen in a solid mass of snow, and I had only a penknife, which I could not hold in my benumbed fingers.

Next I attempted to build a fire, hoping that it might show from the Mountain as a signal-light, though I had little idea that any one would be within its sight. The wood, coated with ice and damp, would scarcely kindle, and, if a blaze succeeded,

it was almost as soon dashed out by the storm, and the pile scattered.

Having nearly exhausted my matches, my paper consumed, in which not unlikely were some ten-dollar bills, for which the Northboro' Bank will be no loser, I gave up further efforts. This, together with my other labors, had kept me several hours longer exposed, and I was sensible of being much weaker and was nearly powerless. With no little difficulty, in my torpid state, I dragged myself under and among the low branches into my lowly resting-place. The hour I judged to be between eight and nine in the evening. It was not without some satisfaction that I looked around me, and beheld the results of my labors. Notwithstanding the open front, a bed of snow, a frosty rock on one side, a congealed mass of snow and brush on the other, I was happy in the reflection that my lot here was infinitely better than it would be outside.

I was now to enter upon a new experience,—a kind I had never known before. I was then, in reality, to spend a night upon the dreary Mountains. I will not ask any one to imagine what my feelings were. Let them endeavor, for a moment, when they retire to their couch at night, to form an idea of them; and let me hope that they may never have similar experience. A dark, wild and seraggy mountain, a howling, pitiless storm of hail and snow, clouds above and clouds beneath, no food, no drink, with a bed of ice and a rock for a pillow, and five thousand feet above any human habitation! Here, shivering and chattering, I went to my dreary covert, not to sleep, not to rest, but to await in suspense the coming of another day.

Drawing myself up into as small a compass as possible under my covering, I prepared to pass a *long, long* night—the longest of my life. And I shall be satisfied, thought I, if it does not seem more than six nights in one. And *sleep!* Ah! that which now is most desirous of all, and which forces itself upon me with such power, must be averted. I know too well its fatal consequences. A few minutes' indulgence, and I never should awake, except in another world. But can I prevent it? Food I require, and thirst presses me hard. These I can endure. I can, at least, palliate their gnawings by the snow around me. But can I prevent *this sleep*? Have I sufficient vital force left to resist its influences? There I do not know myself. The ordeal I have never experienced. But it will be put to the test, and I can but try. My feet are stiff and frozen, my body shakes with the freezing chill which courses along its veins, and I may be overpowered against all my exertions. I do not know. The morning only can tell; and, if then alive, it will also tell whether I shall be able to leave this place.

During the whole night, the storm swept down the mountain's side, and with such violence that I often clenched the handle of my umbrella, for fear the wind would catch underneath and carry away my only frail shelter. To prevent sleep, I took constrained positions, knowing that then I should not retain any one long at a time. Now I leaned on one elbow, then upon the other; then I changed from side to side; then forward, then backward; again at full length, and then drawn up. My feet I was frequently

knocking upon the heels to renew the circulation. Often I leaned against the rock, until its continued coldness, sending death-like tremors through my whole frame, required a different posture. At intervals, the snow, which drove in through the openings and in front, must be brushed off, and the excruciating cramps of my limbs were only to be relieved by violent and determined motions.

All this time, my mind, though oppressed with the constant cravings for sleep, remained not inactive. Thought, contrasting my situation, glided away to the Summit House, where many comforts were awaiting the unfortunate needy;—to the Camp House, in which I had already passed one comfortable night;—to the Glen and Alpine Houses, where so many beds might be at my disposal. I thought of our own family, at the hour of midnight, quietly sleeping within their warm houses, and little dreaming that one of their number, at the same time, was lying upon the cold side of a mountain. I thought of each of my friends and acquaintances, all of whom, I knew, would so gladly offer me a part of their accommodations, could they be made aware of my exposed situation. But I was happy in the belief that they were enjoying a warm shelter in their own quiet homes; and then I doubted not that there were others, in a more suffering condition than myself,—as Sir John Franklin and party, in the polar sea, soldiers in the Crimea, with shattered limbs and mangled bodies, subjected to the severest exposures.

Above all, I could not reconcile to myself the strangeness of my situation,—that any person, who had been in

the farthest corner of the globe, exposed to dangers of many forms, should return, and, by a singular combination of circumstances, find himself obliged to pass a night amid the snows of the Mountains.

THE SECOND DAY.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER THE 26TH.

WHEN the first rays of light appeared this morning, so much sooner had the night passed than I had expected, that I presumed the moon was shining. My body was stiff and rigid with cold, and pressing upon the ground with such a senseless weight, that it seemed to me I had become a part of the Mountain itself. My bones pained me excessively. The weariness I experienced was as if I had climbed the rocky steeps the whole night, and gladly did I adopt a full recumbent position, with the hope that it would bring the desired rest; but with no relief. The glare of day established itself, and slowly I aroused myself from the lethargic state of the last hour. With slower movements my limbs came into action, enabling me to creep upon my hands and knees out to the front of the rock. Here, supported with my hands upon the rock, I exercised, stamping my feet to restore them to warmth and animation,—both feet and hands being more or less frozen.

The snow had ceased falling, but the wind still blew hard and keenly. Clouds obscured the sun, and shut out all view below me, while, above, the air was clear, rendering visible the side of the Mountain. With the aid of my cane I ascended the slope a short distance to the track

more free of brush, being about the line where vegetation ceases, and where a more open view could be had.

Here I stopped, and endeavored to form some idea as to which way I should go. Facing the Mountain, the barren rocky side stretched away to the right and left. The right was lost by a curve not far off. The left, at its extreme, was buried in the clouds, and the top, uniting the two, marked the sky with dark and rugged outlines; and, above all, and behind, at the extreme right, towered a high peak, white with its snowy cap, and like an island in the midst of the clouds. Near me was the brush patch, where I lost the stakes which I was following the night before. There was now nothing left to guide me. There were no landmarks, and I knew not what course to pursue. I had no knowledge of the points of the compass. I had seen nothing, since leaving the Glen House, but the simple ground for a short distance around me; and here the view was limited by clouds, on both sides and below; no object to give the slightest indication as to which way I should direct my steps.

The only idea which carried any degree of security was to find the stakes, and follow them. In this, after a considerable search, I was doomed to disappointment, for I could not discover them beyond this place. Several glimpses I caught of a forest below the clouds, as they changed their position, but it was not sufficient to tempt me to exchange the open side of the Mountain, where I *could* see, if I had the opportunity, for the thick brush and wood where I could *not* see with the best of opportunities.

There was nothing to the right, for in that direction was the snow-capped Mountain, which I presumed to be Mount Washington, and which I wished to leave behind me. In front the Mountain itself interposed, and only the left seemed to present no objection, although that had very little in its favor. All was alike to me; there was no reason why I should go one way rather than another; and I could have no prejudices to bias me for or against any particular way. If one thing, however, in my dilemma, seemed to be worse than others, it was that there did not appear to be anything from which to form an opinion. I might suppose I was on the opposite side of the Mountain from the Glen House, from the fact that I could see no object that I had met in my ascent the day before; but, then, the part now in view was a small portion of the whole Mountain, which would render the supposition of little account.

The case then lay here: Out of the different ways from which I might select, I would choose the one which offered no objection. I did not wish to go to the right, towards Mount Washington again, and I concluded to make a trial to the left. In this I was confirmed by the direction of the stakes, which were leading from the supposed Mount Washington towards the left;* and I had reason to believe that, in making the circuit of the Mountain, whether to the right or to the left, I should somewhere cross my track of the ascent, which would conduct me safely down.

* This Mountain I afterwards learned to be Mount Jefferson, and that Mount Washington lay to the left, behind the bluffs, where it could not be seen.

With these considerations I started on my search with lightened feelings, and with satisfaction at the thought that by preserving this height I should be enabled before noon to detect the rocks and path, the Ledge, or the Camp House, or new road, or the Glen House, which would set me aright.

The ground was covered with snow to the depth of eight or ten inches, with here and there bare spots glistening with a coating of ice; and rocks, hollows, holes, brush and scraggy places, were scattered about on every side. I could travel but slowly, on account of my own weakness, and the various difficulties in the way. My feet broke through the hard crust at nearly every step. The motion of my limbs, by the benumbing cold, was much impeded; and in avoiding the different obstacles it was necessary to go several times the distance it otherwise would have been. Every few minutes with my cane I broke the ice from the rocks, vainly endeavoring to quench my *burning thirst*. I travelled about two hours towards a part which showed some appearances of a path, when I saw that I had gained not more than half the distance, and that, as I approached, it looked less and less likely that I should find any outlet. Concluding, however, that I should not know, except by going there, I continued to walk on.

Towards noon, as I judged it to be, I arrived near the place, and, much to my disappointment, I could not discern anything bearing the least resemblance to an outlet. The rocky and precipitous face of the Mountain alone, commencing from a high ridge above, descended and was lost in a sea of clouds in the depths below. This place, as I afterwards learned, was called the Gulf of Mexico. I should call it the Gulf of Clouds.

There was now no other course but to retrace my steps, discouraging as it might be. What I had supposed would not require more than an hour's walking, had already consumed four, and I could not expect to get back to where I had left in the morning in much less time. But I walked along as fast as the nature of the way and clumsiness of my frozen feet would permit, though my stomach was faint, my body weakened, and my limbs benumbed, for the cold was yet severe. Often, to reach a place nearly in a direct line ahead, it was necessary to go to the right, then the left, avoiding the roughest places, the ups and downs, and the horn-like brush almost impenetrable by human footsteps. Occasionally I stopped a few moments to breathe and to rest. Food, since the morning, I did not realize the want of so much as drink. The lumps of snow and ice afforded a temporary relief only. At one place, on breaking the ice, I found underneath a little trickling water, which, as I drank, seemed to me a luxury known but to few.

As I approached the place I left in the morning the clouds cleared away so that I could see below. I had a view of an expanse of dark forests, beyond which another range of Mountains appeared, but with no glimpse of a building, not a curling smoke or any living object, to cheer or to encourage. Hearing a noise of clinking as if with a steel and hammer upon stone, I looked around to see from whence it proceeded, and perceived upon the top of the bluff the forms of two men. Now, indeed, thought I, shall I be able to effect my escape. They appeared to be standing together, and, as I continued to hear the same noise, I concluded they were there at work; and yet I could not reconcile it to myself that they should be so

occupied at so late an hour and in so exposed and bleak a position. But, elated with the strongest hopes and desires, I raised my voice with halloo after halloo. Discerning no movement in them, I repeated it many times and with greater effort, listening to the sound as it died away on the wind. Again and again I essayed, with my voice at its highest pitch, and until my throat was nearly powerless. At last, believing they might be rocks with shapes like men, and, as it was useless to attempt to reach them, I continued on, but not at all sure, occasionally stopping and attempting with various motions and my voice to attract their attention.

Cruelly disappointed, as I came near the spot where I had encamped, I observed that the sun, which I had seen a part of the day, would soon disappear over the Mountain. I thought it might be best to ascend the Mountain higher up, and endeavor to get a view, and search for an outlet further on to the right. A short trial over the rocks satisfied me that I should not be able to accomplish it, and that darkness would overtake and leave me in a worse position. I sat down to rest and to reflect. What can I do? What is best to be done? What ought I to do? for I am yet free to move and act. There is no reason why I should act impulsively or without thought, but rather from sober judgment. *What is the best course under the circumstances?* Shall I push ahead with all my strength around the mountain, taking the course opposite that of to-day? Or shall I risk my chance in recklessly plunging through the brush among rocks, precipices, or anything that presents down the mountain side?

The clouds gathered around closer and thicker. The in-

tense, the piercing cold seemed forced through and through my body. The wind, the darkness, the coming storm, all seemed in prudence to dictate,—yes, it is better, it must be—there is no alternative,—*another night on the Mountains*, hard as it may be. But I almost shudder to think I must lie down again on the *cold ground*, and for another *whole and long* night! Yet I shudder and tremble much more exposed to this boisterous weather. But perhaps I can find a place here where I can be more comfortable, and suffer less than the last night. There is yet a little time. I searched around for near half an hour, but without success. With some difficulty in the storm and darkness I descended a short distance and found the rock where I had spent the last night.

As I looked upon the dreary spot, the thought came, *Can it be* that I must go through with another night? Had the idea of *this* occurred this morning should I not have felt at least a little discouraged? O that I might awake, and find it a dreadful dream!

I fixed down my umbrella in the same place, and endeavored to close it in more securely than before. But I could effect little with my swollen and almost useless hands, and with my benumbed limbs bending and twisting under me. And it is of no use to attempt building a fire, thought I, for the wind is violent, like that of the last night, and the snow again comes driving and whirling. Perhaps it is better that I cannot have it. I might receive in my present state more injury than benefit.

But this *intolerable thirst*! My throat and stomach feel as if they were scorched. I must get some drink before com-

mencing upon this long night. I believe I can find my way to the place where I discovered water during the day ; but the risk in the storm would be too great. I must be content without it. Darkness advances. I dread, yet I must seek, my shelter. In how short a time should I be powerless without it!

For drink I gathered large crusts of frozen snow, which I could only take with me among the low branches by placing them on the ground before me, and drawing myself up to them. In this way, upon my hands and knees, through the cold snow I crept into my humble abode. And humble I found it; and, if ever I had in my heart anything like vain pride, I am sure there was none now remaining.

I endeavored to soften my bed, which was an uneven place, hard, rough, inclined and crooked, and as if made up of a mixture of snow, sharp stones, stubs and knobs of roots, by breaking out the frozen ice and snow from the fir-tops which I had gathered and placing them under me. But the improvement was slight, and I felt them pressing into my flesh painfully. Then, as I curled myself up to acquire warmth, thoughts came to my mind: "Well, — I cannot say, — this may be my last 'Ramble.' This cold is stupefying, — I cannot get warm; and if I lose myself for five minutes it is perhaps decided. But I may as well take a humorous view of it. How singular, that so immediately after the publishing of 'Rambles in Eastern Asia,' this last and shortest of all my rambles, and within my own country, should be the *winding up*! — the thread caught and broken on Mount Washington, almost in sight of my own home. Terminated in such a manner, no one

could know the circumstances. Different reports, if any, would be circulated. Some, perhaps, would have it that I was insane; others that I wished to commit suicide; and the most charitable might allow that I was lost in the fog. Of course there would be no one to say to the contrary of any of them.

But the second night was passed much like the first. I could not control the shaking which extended through my whole muscular system, it being like that experienced when one's teeth chatter with the cold. It stormed and snowed all night, and the snow drifted in considerably, entering by the open front of my covering, though not so as to reach much the upper part of my body. The wind came in violent gusts, threatening to strip to atoms my only shelter. Should this take place, then would come a greater trial than any before.

To be prepared for such an emergency, I decided, in my own mind, that, if it should happen, I would use all my strength to descend the Mountain in whatever direction I could move, although it appeared next to impossible to do so in the night and in the midst of the thick brush with its sharp and angular limbs; and that, wherever exhaustion obliged me to stop, I would fasten my handkerchief in the most conspicuous place, as a signal to any who might pass within its sight; and, when it came to the worst, I would take from my pocket-book a piece of paper, and write upon it a brief account of my misfortune, for the satisfaction of my friends.

I suffered much from the want of water, notwithstanding

every few minutes I took into my mouth a piece of the snow-crust, which alleviated the distress only while I was swallowing it. But it would not melt fast enough to quench my thirst. With my mouth chilled by repeated mouthfuls of snow or ice, there was left insufficient warmth to melt but a little, and that at intervals. I was also distressed for breath. My respiration was short, and my lungs would apparently inflate to but about half their natural capacity; and with the greatest effort that I could exert there was little improvement, the sensation being constant of desiring to take a full breath. This state of the lungs I attributed to the contracting action of cold on the chest.

I also continually experienced a severe pain in my left side, as if a heavy weight was resting there, or as if great compression was being made over the heart.

Occasionally, as on the night before, I examined my pulse. It could not be felt with my benumbed fingers, but with the palm of my hand I could make it out. It was accelerated, as I judged, to about eighty, with nearly a third less than its natural force, somewhat laboring, and very intermittent. I did not fear but that I should be alive the next day, if I did not fall asleep.

The thought occurred, what if I am obliged to stay out a night after this, without food, drink, or sleep? After a short consideration, taking into account my present state, that which had passed, and the chances to come, I concluded that, *terrible* as it might be, I should be able to survive it; but whether I could then walk or not, I could not decide. And I was glad I *could* think so, for I much preferred to have

my hopes leading ahead of my actual powers, than to have them following behind short of the reality.

“But how did you keep yourself awake?” is the question that has been many times asked of me. If it is possible for me to know correctly, I should say that it was in consequence of the multiplicity of thoughts which crowded on my mind during the night, together with the almost constant variation of my position. I must confess that I was afraid I should fall asleep in spite of myself. Several times I did fancy that I was already in a doze, when I started with a sudden impulse, and aroused myself anew. I strove to vary my feelings by the consideration of subjects most different from each other.

At one time I was recalling to mind the many agreeable acquaintances I had made in various parts of the world,—or, rather, they seemed to appear without recalling,—and the exciting scenes I had met in my travels. I thought of those friends at home and abroad from whom I had received favors, so many kindnesses and hospitalities, and regretted that I had been so remiss in properly making my acknowledgments to them; and it seemed to me that every person I had ever known or seen was present to me.

At another time my mind reverted to the people below. Those who know that I have gone on to the Mountains, will they be likely to think of me again? It is very doubtful. There is no reason why they should. At the Camp House they may; as I intended to return there by noon of the same day. But they will probably suppose that I have passed down without stopping. And yet they may not, as they

would think it strange that I had gone, and did not call for a few moments on my way. At the Glen House they will presume I have gone over the Mountains to the other side, and am safely lodged in some hotel, and then will think no more about me. At the Alpine House, in Gorham, they will wonder why I am staying so long with their horse, when I expected to be back the same afternoon.

Again, I was commenting on the great strength of the wind, which came with almost terrific violence, whether it could loosen the rocks above, and set them to rolling and bounding down the mountain side upon me.

And, when my frail covering quivered and bent above me, I thought of the part it had thus far performed towards my preservation. How different the result would have been had there not been a little rain to induce me to take the umbrella! Without it, in all probability, I should not have survived the first night, or a half of the night, and much less the second. And upon how very slight a circumstance depended its being retained, after the rain had ceased, and there was no further use for it, and it impeded so much my movements! Several times, while buffeting the storm, I nearly left it by the wayside; but, with a kind of distant thought that it might yet be of some service, I was induced to carry it a little longer. At last, when my hands were suffering extremely from exposure, and myself frequently thrown down, I was on the point of giving it up entirely; but the thought occurring at that moment that I had in my pocket a cord, which I had taken off my valise on leaving the Glen House, deterred me. I

fastened the umbrella to my coat, and carried it without further trouble. And now I am yet alive, from its proving a shelter sufficient to prevent me from chilling and freezing.

To hold myself awake I did not make exertion simply to keep my eyes open, but to favor an activity of the mind, to enliven its action by allowing those thoughts to occupy my attention which were most interesting, or those connected directly or indirectly with my situation. Had I made the effort only *to keep awake*, with no other exercise of the mind than thinking of the cold, I fear I should have given away, and sunk with the agreeable stupor which so fatally succeeds a certain degree of cold.

Desiring to know as near as possible the exact sensation of this state of cold, without its attendant dangers, and for the variety it would afford, I thought I would endeavor to experience it. If I recollect correctly my body was so benumbed, that I had not at this time or afterwards any of the tremblings to which I before had been subject.

Taking a constrained position, by leaning backwards as I sat upon the ground, I placed one elbow upon a pointed stone, and rested my head to one side, on the palm of my hand. This was with the view that if I should be overpowered, the pain occasioned would eventually awaken me; and if that failed, the relaxation of my hand under my head and falling of my body would at last be sufficient in its effects to recall the notice of my mind. I then, with a little anxiety, gave myself up to whatever impressions might present.

A few minutes passed, and my thoughts seemed to have

no particular form or course. The sensation of cold was succeeded by a kind of soothing glow stealing along through every nerve and fibre, filling the whole system as if with an invisible ethereal fluid. My body soon seemed like a mass of cold clay, over which I had no control, and in which my own self was dwelling as a mere tenant, and from which I was about to escape, leaving it behind me. My mind became perfectly composed and quiet, as if absorbing some balmy and mysterious influence which floated gently over and around me. I did not wish to move or make the least effort. I felt resigned and reconciled to whatever situation I might be in. The world seemed nothing to me, and life not worth living for. What tie could the world possess against the fascinating spell which was now riveting its bonds upon me! I would willingly and gladly give up all for a half hour of this delightful indulgence. I would not if I could stay its procedure. It comes—I am happy—and let it continue, was the thought or the sum of my sensations; and I believe I was fast sinking, as in a charmed and unresisting state, into the soft folds of that insidious enemy—SLEEP!

But I cannot remember all that I felt and experienced. It is now like a dream, the recollection of which is, in a measure, indistinct and imperfect; and yet the impression seems still to remain, and I cannot recall it. I can however remember that after about ten minutes had elapsed, I brought the subject to my mind that I was making an experiment, and that, as I was not now myself, I should not yield to the present influences, but govern my actions in such a course

as I knew I should pursue when unsubjected to allurements. I aroused myself by making extra exertions, moving first my head, and then my limbs, until all were brought into exercise. I believe, had I not long since formed the habit of preparing myself for various emergencies, I might, in this case, have given up to my greatest inclination *to sleep*; and, the precaution I had taken proving insufficient to awaken me, I should probably have *still slept*.

THE THIRD DAY.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27TH.

AFTER another long night my heart was gladdened to perceive the breaking of day.

Clouds obscured the view, and I endeavored to procure rest before rising, by lying in my cold bed a little longer. But in this I was unsuccessful; and, on looking off soon afterwards from under the border of my light covering, I saw through the dry brush a building in the distance below. As soon as I could realize that it was not my imagination, I began slowly to move my limbs, and slowly and painfully I crawled forth to the front of the rock. Here I sat and puzzled my mind as to what house could be on this side of the Mountains. It was several miles off, situated at the further side of a large forest, which extended to the base of the steep below me. I had heard of no other house being very near the Mountain but the Glen House. I thought I could recognize this as being that house, though I had had only a passing glance of it. But how can it, thought I, be on this side? for there is the white cap of Mt. Washington in a similar direction, and about three miles from here. As it was, there was no way to solve the difficulty, and I could only remain in perplexity.

I supported myself on the rock, and exercised my block-like feet, stamping to restore them to animation. I was fully conscious of my weakness, by being obliged every few moments to

stop and rest. The cold was yet severe, but not so intense as that of the two previous days.

After about two hours I was able to walk, and with painful steps, tottering and slipping, I ascended a short distance to the tract above the brush, where I might, by having a clear view, determine the course to be entered upon.

I considered first the plan of taking a straight line down the Mountain, and through the forests, to the Glen House, or to whatever house it might prove to be. But the thoughts of being shut up in a forest where I could not see out, and of the entangling brush, fallen trees, precipices, rocks, and various other obstacles, and losing my way, were sufficient to deter me, and I preferred to trust to the greater safety of open land. Believing that my course ought to be to encircle the Mountain in the opposite direction from that of the day before, I determined to adopt it, keeping within a similar distance from the heights above me.

Starting off, I went along slowly and with unstable steps, touching with one hand on the rocks, until I should gain the natural use of my feet and limbs. I frequently stopped, to break pieces of ice from the rocks, and to gather lumps of snow, endeavoring to quench my thirst. Food I cared little for, and thought I should not wish to eat, even were it at hand. But I could not remain ignorant of the fact that I was becoming weaker, that my strength was less than that of yesterday. This I perceived by the effort I was obliged to make to hold my body erect, it inclining to stoop forward like a man bowed down with old age. Often I raised myself upright, but was very soon in the same bent posture; which

perhaps is not strange, when it is recollected that I had been from the first without food, rest or sleep, constantly subjected to cold, and constantly making exertion. Yet, aiding myself with one hand on the cane and the other stretched out holding upon the rocks by the side, I hobbled on, with the hope that each step was bringing me nearer to the outlet.

I should think it was towards the middle of the day that I halted upon an elevated flat rock, and paused to lay out ahead the course most free of impediments among the rocks and difficult places. I had concluded to take a range, if possible, a hundred feet higher up the Mountain, so that I should not pass unobserved any house below, which the oval form of the land might conceal. I was on the point of moving on, when, to my joy and astonishment, I saw, directly ahead of me, a party of men just coming into sight around the angle of the bluff. They had long sticks or poles, and were advancing in a line a little distance from each other. They appeared to be looking around on the ground, as if for some object in the snow. With not the shadow of a thought that I could be the object they were in quest of, I cried out to them in a loud voice. All stopped short, and looked at me with a steady gaze. Why do they stare at me so? I wondered. They seem astonished and amazed. Perhaps they are surprised in meeting with any one on this side of the Mountain. But I am most happy to fall in with them. I shall soon know now whether I am on the right course or not.

Directly, one of them, Mr. Hall, recovering first from the apparent surprise, started forward, cutting his way with a small axe at places through the brush. On coming near, he

stopped, and asked, in a tone of evident incredibility, "Is this Dr. Ball?"

Receiving an answer in the affirmative, he seemed more disconcerted, as if he had expected a negative reply, and as if he could not believe, and continued,

"Are you the person who left the Glen House, Wednesday afternoon, to walk up on the new road?"

I replied that I was.

As if still incredulous, "And have you been out on the Mountain since that time?"

I said that I had, since Thursday morning.

"It is very wonderful! How *could* you preserve yourself all this time? You had nothing to eat, nothing to drink! And you can stand!"

The others, Francis Smith, J. J. Davis, Thomas Culhane, Patrick Culhane, and an Irishman called Thomas, gathered around, and all, with expressions of doubtfulness, looked at me, without speaking. Mr. H. then informed me that they were a party which had come in search of me, all being experienced guides; and that men had been out looking for me the day before, but, failing, they had turned out this morning to continue the search. They had followed my tracks to near this place, but, losing them in the brush, they were extending their line to re-discover them, when they heard my voice.

Distressed by thirst, I asked them for drink, thinking they might have brought some, in case it should be needed for resuscitation. They seemed to regret deeply that they had provided none; one of them had food in his pocket.

I took a piece of gingerbread, chewing it, but, from the dry and parched state of my mouth, I could not swallow it, although I had little inclination to eat.

I inquired if any one had been on the bluff in the afternoon of the previous day. Mr. Smith answered that he and another man had been there, and stood for some time looking around for me; that they also went to the summit, and, finding my tracks, followed them to within a half a mile of this place; but, night advancing, they despaired of success, and concluded to return home. Mr. S. said the wind was blowing very hard while on the bluffs, which probably was the reason they did not hear my hallooing to them.

Knowing that aid now was within my reach, that this was my rescue, and that I had not to rely upon myself, my strength was less, and I could not walk as firmly as before. I threw my arms around the necks of two of the party, as I was directed, and, walking between them, we started on our return. And I shall not forget the thrills of emotion I experienced, from their hearty good-will, readiness, and earnestness, in affording me their assistance, each anxious to render some aid. But I could not but notice, from the implements brought, that the party had no expectation of finding me alive.

I observed that the course we were on was the same that I was pursuing when discovered.

Coming to a rock which had a small hollow in the top, the ice was broken out with a hatchet, and the two swallows of water it contained, which I was enabled to get by bending

low, was more grateful than any wines or drinks I had ever tasted.

On our way, I asked how it was we were approaching Mount Washington, the snow-capped Mountain ahead, when we ought to go from it? In the answer given, I learned that Mount Washington, from this part, was not visible, on account of the high bluffs above us, and that the mountain we were now approaching was Mount Jefferson. This, then, resolved my perplexity, and accounted for my decision in going around the other way, towards the Gulf of Mexico, instead of coming in this direction. (See note, page 42.)

At a good pace, we traversed the side of the Mountain, and, coming to the regular path, descended the well-known Ledge to the well-remembered Camp House. The distance from the place where I was found was about a mile and a half, and about two from my encampment.

Mr. Myers welcomed me as "from the dead," saying, "I know you have had a severe trial, for, *here below*, during the first night, the water in a bowl was frozen thick, in a room adjoining one which had a fire. Besides, towards night of the same day, I went up on the Ledge, and, while standing and looking around to see if you were not yet coming, I froze both of my heels. And such a night of anxiety I never wish to pass again! All night long the storm beat down upon the house. I laid down a little, but could not sleep; and rising I spent the time in walking to and fro, opening and looking out of the door, building the fire, &c. And *how*, thought I, must it be to *you* on the Mountains, and during the whole of that long night?"

I remarked that, although pretty severe, I believed I should have reached this place alone, as I was, at last, on the right course. But to this Mr. H. expressed a different opinion, for the reason that, soon after they had started with me, the clouds gathered around and shut in the view, which I had not observed.

My boots being taken off, my feet were examined, and found still to remain frozen. Cold water, from melting snow and ice, was brought, into which my feet were plunged and bathed until the frost was removed. I drank a cup of tea slightly warmed, but it made me sick, and my stomach rejected it; cold water only, which I very much craved, could be retained.

Feeling a little rested, my feet and hands wrapped in flannels, I was placed upon a horse, and, with the party, proceeded over the new road a mile and a half. The horse, for many years accustomed to the Mountains, carried me very steadily, and without guiding; and seemed to know that his burthen required in his movements care and caution, — guardedly stepping around or over a stone, stump, or gully, or with easy motions by the side of some place soft and miry; at the same time a man walked on each side, to give their assistance, if required. In this way I rode along with some degree of comfort, though not without additional fatigue, as I supported myself from falling. The distance, although short, seemed long and tedious. This, with my exhaustion, was such as to remind me of a trip made some years before to a volcano in Manilla, where our party travelled on horseback the greater part of two

days and nights; and, during this ride, my mind was constantly upon the extreme weariness that I experienced on that occasion, the two states of exhaustion being so similar to each other.

At the end of this part of the road, and which is not yet finished for travelling, we met Mr. Thompson waiting with his horses and carriage. He had arranged with the party, to be informed, by means of signal-flags, when my body was discovered, and had watched the men with a telescope as they advanced over the side of the Mountain and back, and set off in season to meet them on their arrival. Mr. T. took me by the hand, and welcomed me "back *alive*," saying, "You have been through what no other person has, or probably will again, in a thousand years."

Being transferred to his carriage, I reclined at full length, covered with blankets, which protected me from the rain as well as the cold; and, with my head supported by one of my rescuers, we continued on. As every motion of jolting or rocking gave to my now sensitive body more or less pain, the horses were driven slowly; and, with the party following on foot, we arrived at the Glen House about five o'clock in the afternoon. Happy, indeed, were the feelings of *one*, as he saw the carriage draw up in front of the substantial hotel, and observed, in the anxious faces of those who gathered around, the expression of deep and heartfelt sympathy, entertained towards him, a stranger! And, if possible, happier still were those feelings, when he heard from their own lips, in softened tones, expressions of interest

and regard at his return, the lost alive, and others, bearing evidence of their sincerity in their solicitations to render personal assistance.

Here, under the kind charge of the female portion of the household, I was made as comfortable as care and attention could make a sufferer. Being asked what I should prefer to take first, I replied, a little hot cordial, if it was to be had. This prepared and swallowed in teaspoonfuls much revived me. Soon after, desirous to take nourishment, and knowing the danger of too much hearty food immediately following so long an abstinence, I drank part of a cup of gruel, to which a little milk was added. This I repeated at intervals of an hour, with occasional swallows of water for my ceaseless thirst, and thus continued to improve.

Mr. Thompson, then being about to send to Gorham for the mail, asked me if I had any communication to make. Not supposing that my friends had received any intelligence respecting me, or of my having left the city even, I requested Mr. Thompson to send a few lines to my brothers in Boston, informing them of my accident and safety, and of my improving condition; which he kindly attended to.

Refreshed by food and drink, and desiring repose, I soon had the satisfaction of enjoying once more the comforts of a nice, soft bed, and I trust with a higher appreciation than ever of a shelter impenetrable to the howling winds and drifting snows. In the mean time my injuries were cared for. Both hands and feet were much swollen, and were discolored to blackness; and appearances would lead to the belief that all vitality in them was lost. The sense of feeling was gone,

and they seemed like masses of cold clay attached to the extremities, with heavy dragging sensations. The right foot was more severely frozen than the other, owing to its being a little larger, thus filling the boot closer, and admitting the cold more freely. The right hand also was more frozen than the left, from its being more exposed, as that hand was used mostly with the cane.

My proposition was to apply to the injuries a poultice of flaxseed meal, with oil and charcoal ; but, at the suggestion of Mr. Hall, who, from some experience with frozen limbs in these mountainous regions, had great faith in his remedy, and to which I could have no objection, a poultice of charred hickory leaves, pulverized and simmered with fresh lard, was substituted ; this being cooled, was laid on the hands and feet, and enclosed with large cloths. No other portion of the body being frozen, I was made as comfortable as the circumstances of the case would admit.

All at the hotel, from the proprietor through to the servants, were exceedingly kind and assiduous in their attentions, offering freely their aid, and, perceiving my entire helplessness, desired me to call on them at all hours. To Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, Mr. J. S. Hall, Miss D. Watts, — who spared no means or personal attentions to add to my comfort, or improve my condition, refusing all remuneration, — to them, and other members of the family, I shall always feel under the deepest obligations.

To recapitulate, then, in brief, my exposure on the Mountains without food, shelter or fire, with snow and ice only for drink, was about *sixty hours* ; and I had been without sleep

for upwards of *eighty hours* — of which one night was spent at the Camp House, and two in the snow, subjected to a furious storm and intense cold, with the sole protection of an umbrella.

Towards nine o'clock in the evening I began to experience, for the first time after my return, a strong desire to sleep. In this I was very soon able to indulge, happy with the thought that there was now no fear, — that I might give myself up entirely to rest with no anxiety for the morrow.

Mr. H. remained in the room with me, and, during the night, several times aroused me from my too deep slumber. And the next morning I awoke at my usual hour, with the very agreeable consciousness that I had not, at least *that night*, exhausted by unremitted watchfulness and unceasing change of position, lain shivering and freezing amid the blasts and snows of a storm on the WHITE MOUNTAINS!



APPENDIX.

For a few days after my rescue my sufferings were comparatively light. Dr. H. Wardwell, of Gorham, was in attendance, and my brother, Dr. A. Ball, of Boston, arrived. There was general prostration of my system, with some fever, and thirst so great and constant as with difficulty to be satisfied, requiring drink often during the day, and every half hour at night. Slight chills, commencing at the feet, frequently ran through my body, causing the whole nervous system to vibrate. My feet, as if dead, were without feeling or sensation, distorted by swelling, and covered with water-blisters. About the ankles, and above the injuries, the pain was severe, with piercing and racking sensations, as if pointed sticks and nails were thrust into the flesh, and wrenched back and forth among the bones, tendons, and nerves ; and, when cramp set in, the pain for a few minutes was excruciating. My hands ached and burned day and night, quite as if freshly immersed in scalding water ; but, with no other frozen parts, I only experienced a general soreness and tenderness, and I thought myself under the circumstances comfortably well off.

With my mind constantly occupied by varying incidents, the time did not pass as heavily as it might have done. During the day some member of the family came in, or others called and helped beguile the hours with agreeable conversation. In fact, before this I did not so fully realize the narrowness of my escape. As different persons spoke about it,—the foreboding appearance of the mountain, as the dense clouds settled in blackness over it ; the presumption of my death the first night, with the belief, confirmed beyond a doubt, after the second ; the almost miraculous preservation ; and the bare escapes told of others, brought it more intimately to my mind. Then the relation of the various stories connected with the moun-

tains, served in a measure to draw my thoughts from my sufferings. Among these was the story of Daniel Webster, who, after having made a toilsome ascent and reached the summit to Mount Washington, expressed himself in nearly these words : " And, after so much labor, have I succeeded in scaling your lofty sides, and now I meet with such a cold reception ! "

Again, my room was situated so that, while lying in my bed even, I could look out and survey the Mountain ; or, bolstered up in my chair, I could sit at the window, and with the telescope bring the summit within my view and peer in among the rocks, ravines, and craggy places. And often, as I gazed upon the stern, and as if unrelenting visage of Mount Washington, I found myself soliloquizing upon the cold greeting and inhospitable treatment I had there experienced.

On some of these days the Mountain was clear of clouds, and the sun shone brightly over the summit. Why could not I have had as favorable a time ? But I might, could I have waited for it ; and I felt a great desire to make a second attempt. At other times the Mountain was enveloped in clouds, and changing every few minutes into a variety of conditions.

I wished much to see the exact spot where I had encamped two nights, and although it is in nearly the line between the Glen House and summit, yet we could not make it out. But this is a pleasure that perhaps will be reserved for me (if well enough) the next warm season, when I presume, from my vivid recollections of the place, I can find my way directly to it.

Having remained about a week at the Glen House, and feeling as well as I should probably for some weeks to come, we made our preparations the evening beforehand, and the next morning set off for home. By means of a sofa placed in the carriage I was enabled to ride to Gorham very comfortably ; and by the cars, reclining all the way in the saloon, we reached Boston the same evening. There meeting my brothers, and in their care conveyed to the American House, I had satisfaction in the thought that I could for the present contemplate the White Mountains at a suitable distance.

The following letter to my brother, from Mr. Hall, one of the party who went in search of me on the Mountain, I have taken the liberty to insert here. Mr. Hall built the Summit House, and resided there two seasons, and is now the proprietor of a hotel at East Burke, which is another commanding point of interest in the beautiful scenery of the White Mountains ; for his

noble qualities and disinterested conduct towards the unfortunate, may kind fortune ever attend him.

GLEN, *November 4, 1855.*

MY DEAR SIR : You requested me to write the particulars of your brother's adventures at the White Mountains ; which I will try to do, so far as I am able. The first knowledge I had of your brother's being lost was on Friday evening, Oct. 26 ; though I had been informed the evening before that there had been a gentleman at Mr. Myers' cottage at the Ledge, the night before, and that he was expected at the Glen House Thursday evening, and had not arrived ; but we all supposed that he had stopped the second night with Mr. Myers, and therefore gave ourselves no uneasiness in regard to his safety.

Friday noon Mr. Thompson received intelligence that he left Mr. Myers' Thursday morning for the summit, and had not returned. He immediately sent a man (Francis Smith) to look after him, hoping to find him safely sheltered in the Summit House. But on his return, late in the evening, with intelligence that he had not reached the summit, but that he had crossed his trail several times on his way up and back, we had every reason to suppose that he was lost, and that he had perished the night before, unless by chance he had reached the woods, and found a shelter from the fury of the storm. But we could have but little hope that, if he was then alive, he could survive till we could relieve him from his perilous situation. We started as early as we thought proper Saturday morning on our mournful journey, expecting, if we found the object of our search, to find him in the cold embrace of death, and actually prepared ourselves to bear him off *dead*. Our party consisted of three when we started,—myself, J. J. Davis (who assisted me in bearing off poor Lizzie Bourne), and Francis Smith. We took a man at Mr. Myers', and proceeded to within three-quarters of a mile of the summit ; there we came to his trail, which crossed our path from east to west. We followed it but a short distance in that direction, when it led us in a circuitous direction towards the north-east, on the line of the carriage-road. After following about half a mile we crossed our path (the bridle path that we followed up) in a direction nearly east. Here we met Patrick and Thomas Culhane, who joined our party, making six, and then, for the first time, I began to entertain a hope that we should find him alive, as the trail led toward the woods. We followed on with anxious step for the distance of a mile, when we came to a thicket of stunted spruce and fir. Here we lost the trail, as the snow had blown in to the depth of a foot or more, and we separated, after a brief consultation, three to the left, and three to the right, anxiously looking for a camp, or the trail, that we might again pursue the object of our search. We had not entirely passed the thicket, when, to our inexpressible joy and astonishment, we saw your brother, standing erect and alive, having spent

about sixty hours in sight of the Glen House, if the cloud had not obstructed the view, without food or shelter but his umbrella, with snow at least four inches deep, and the wind, blowing almost a gale, sufficiently cold to freeze the most hardy of our mountaineers. It is the most astonishing thing in my experience of about twenty years of mountain life. But to proceed ; we found him in good spirits, and, although his hands were badly swollen and numb, and his limbs hardly sufficient to bare his weight, he informed us that he was looking out a way to go out, and had taken the caution to fasten his umbrella to a button-hole in his coat, in case he needed it to shelter him another night. My feelings here may be better imagined than described. He was suffering from thirst. We could not raise a cup of water to his parched lips, but we hastened to a rock, which, like the rock that Moses smote, and water gushed out to slake the thirst of the children of Israel, afforded the greatest luxury that could be administered. We assisted him down to Mr. Myers', and there administered to his wants as far as possible, using means to take the frost out of his feet, and prepare him as well as possible to ride to the Glen House, a distance of four miles. The first mile he rode the faithful horse Tom, who, as if conscious of his charge, stepped from rock to rock with the greatest caution. We reached the Glen House in about an hour after we left Mr. Myers', to the astonishment of all who have become acquainted with the facts.

I would here add that on Wednesday, the day your brother went to the mountains, there was sufficient rain to form a crust over the snow, by which every foot-print was left. Thursday night there was sufficient snow fell to cover up the trail ; but the wind blew the snow out of the track the most of the way, but in the hollows covered it to the depth of a foot or more. Had the snow fallen without wind, there would have been but little chance to find him ; and, in less than an hour after we found him, it commenced snowing, and I am satisfied that we could not have followed the trail an hour longer. There is nothing in the history of the White Mountains to compare with this case of your brother ; and I am very sure its parallel will not be known in time to come. Your brother can give a more accurate account of the affair himself. I have simply given you a brief account of the case, so far as my knowledge extends, thinking that you might possibly extract something that may be of some interest ; especially to know that your brother has our sympathies for his misfortune, and our best wishes for his speedy recovery and future prosperity.

I am, sir, yours very respectfully,
JOSEPH S. HALL.

To A. BALL, M. D.

It is now March 1st, 1856. Upwards of four months have elapsed since my accident. Fortunately, I have recovered from the very helpless condition in which I remained for twelve weeks, and, under the treatment of my brothers,

Dr. S. Ball and Dr. H. Barnes, am now able to be out. My hands are nearly well, with no loss but a single nail from one finger. My feet, without the loss of a joint, I am able to use with moderation, to walk short distances ; they are more sensitive to the cold, but give me little trouble. With no apparently ill effects remaining, my general health is quite restored. I have indeed endured much suffering both mental and physical, passing sleepless nights and painful days ; but hardly more than I could have supposed would follow as a natural result of the injuries sustained.

During this interval I read with much interest in the *Boston Transcript* the account of another excursion to the summit, by X. and his party. Although I am no advocate for late trips, especially after my *late experience*, yet his ascent will prove that mine was not in reality too late in the season ; but to other circumstances are to be attributed its accident and failure. Thus there are recorded of Mount Washington, in 1855, three ascents in three consecutive months, — that of Miss Bourne in September, my own in October, and that of X. in November : the latest was successful, and the two earlier were unsuccessful.

From what I am able to learn, I should say that September is as late as any attempt to ascend to the summit ought to be made, and particularly if the visitor goes for pleasure. I am inclined to think that people are not usually aware that September is late, and that the month following snow occasionally makes its appearance. It ought to be known to all that the two summit houses are closed by *the middle of September each year*, when the proprietors leave, and do not again return until the next June. One of the most hardy men of the Mountains told me that he with his friend undertook to make the ascent in February ; but when they had arrived within a mile of the summit they were obliged to turn back almost frozen.

From my own experience, and from the many accounts of others, I am convinced that the only *safe way* to visit Mount Washington is to take a guide, and the *unsafe way* is to go without one. The weather is so variable, and liable to the most sudden changes, that, although a person may make the trip in the majority of cases safely, yet occasionally there might be a failure, and the consequences prove fatal. I would then say, especially, *Take a guide*. Take a guide until the new carriage-road is finished. Then invalids and all may ride to the summit in vehicles, so constructed that, by raising or depressing,

the seats will be always level, safe in ascending or descending, and with *no danger of losing the way*. It is true many prefer to go alone and independently, to the risk of an uncompanionable and unintelligent associate; but safety here demands more than the gratification of minor wishes.

Another thing in which visitors do not sufficiently guard themselves is proper clothing. I was informed at the Glen House that in the majority of cases it is very difficult to convince them that they will absolutely require warmer garments at the summit than at the base of the Mountain. When the weather below is very warm, they expect to find it the same above; but in reality there is a difference of several degrees. In July and August the thermometer shows frequently a sinking to below the freezing-point; and in general overcoats and shawls are necessary for comfort, even in the warmest part of the day. Visitors arrive at the summit in a considerable glow and perspiration; they remain looking off the Mountain, absorbed with the beauty of the prospect, and forget the cold wind which is blowing upon them. Too late they think of their shawls or cloaks, that they might have brought with them, which would have obviated all difficulties. The result frequently is a cold and cough; perspiration has received a sudden check; pains in the chest, irritation or inflammation of the lungs follow, and ill health is often a consequence.



CHAPTER 1

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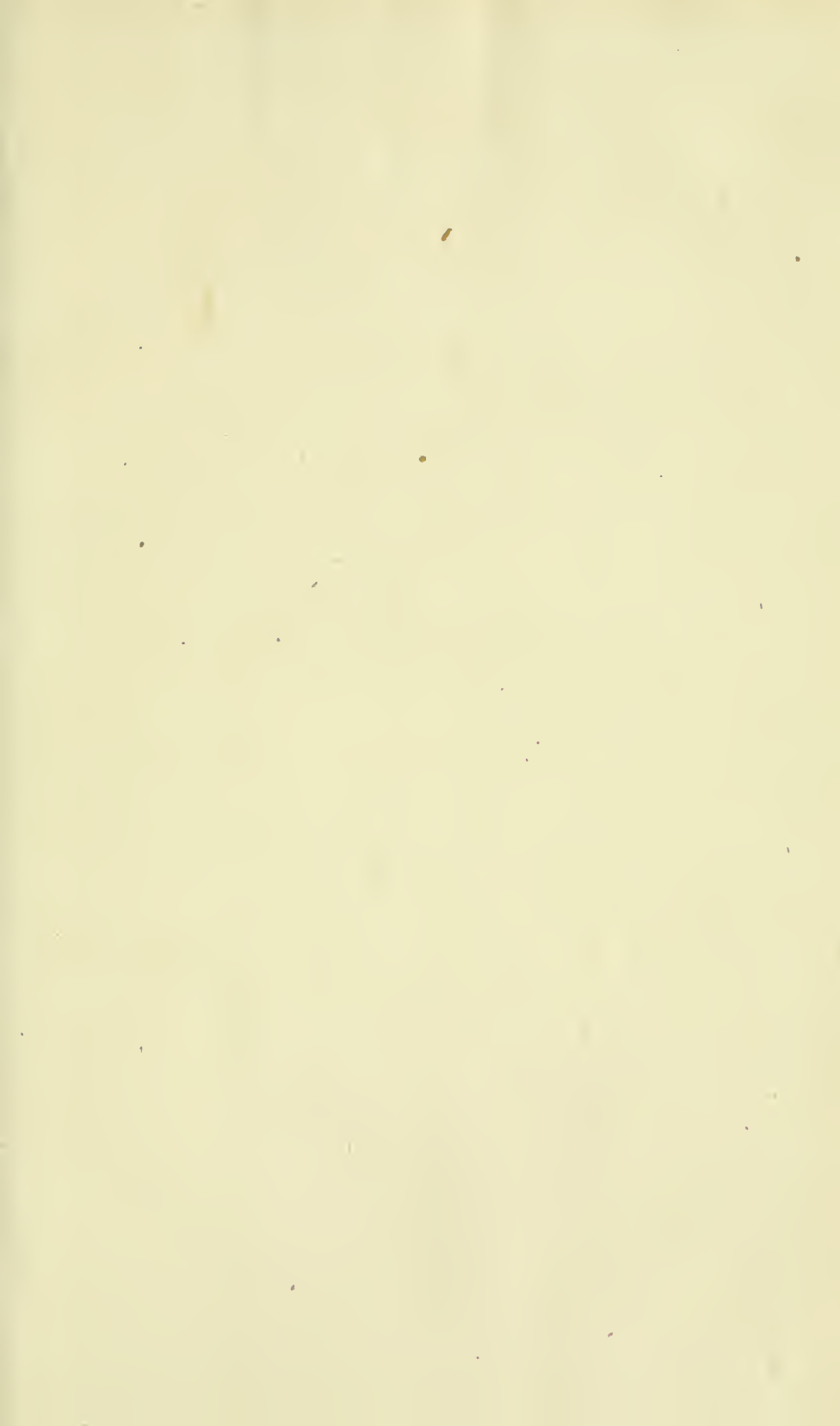
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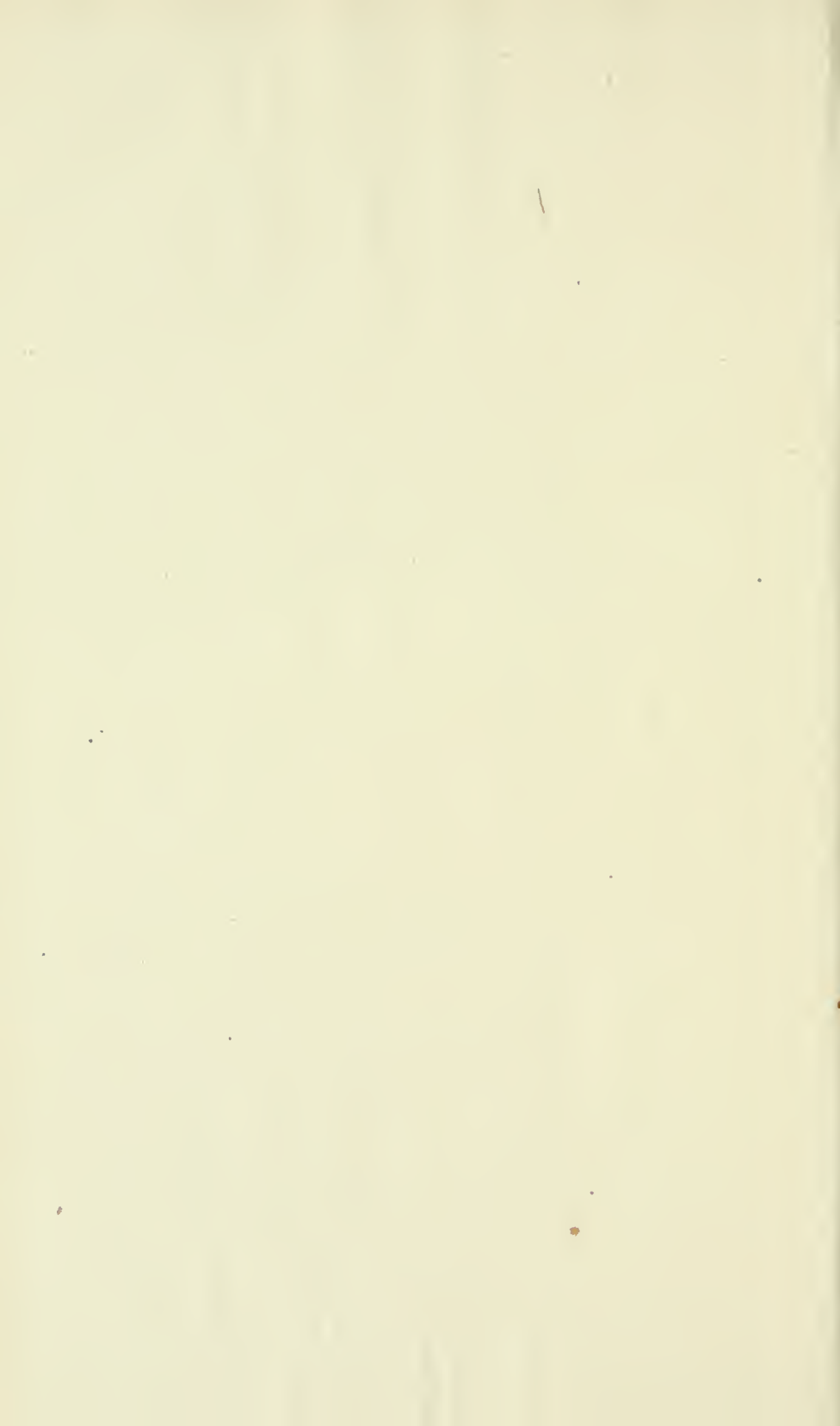
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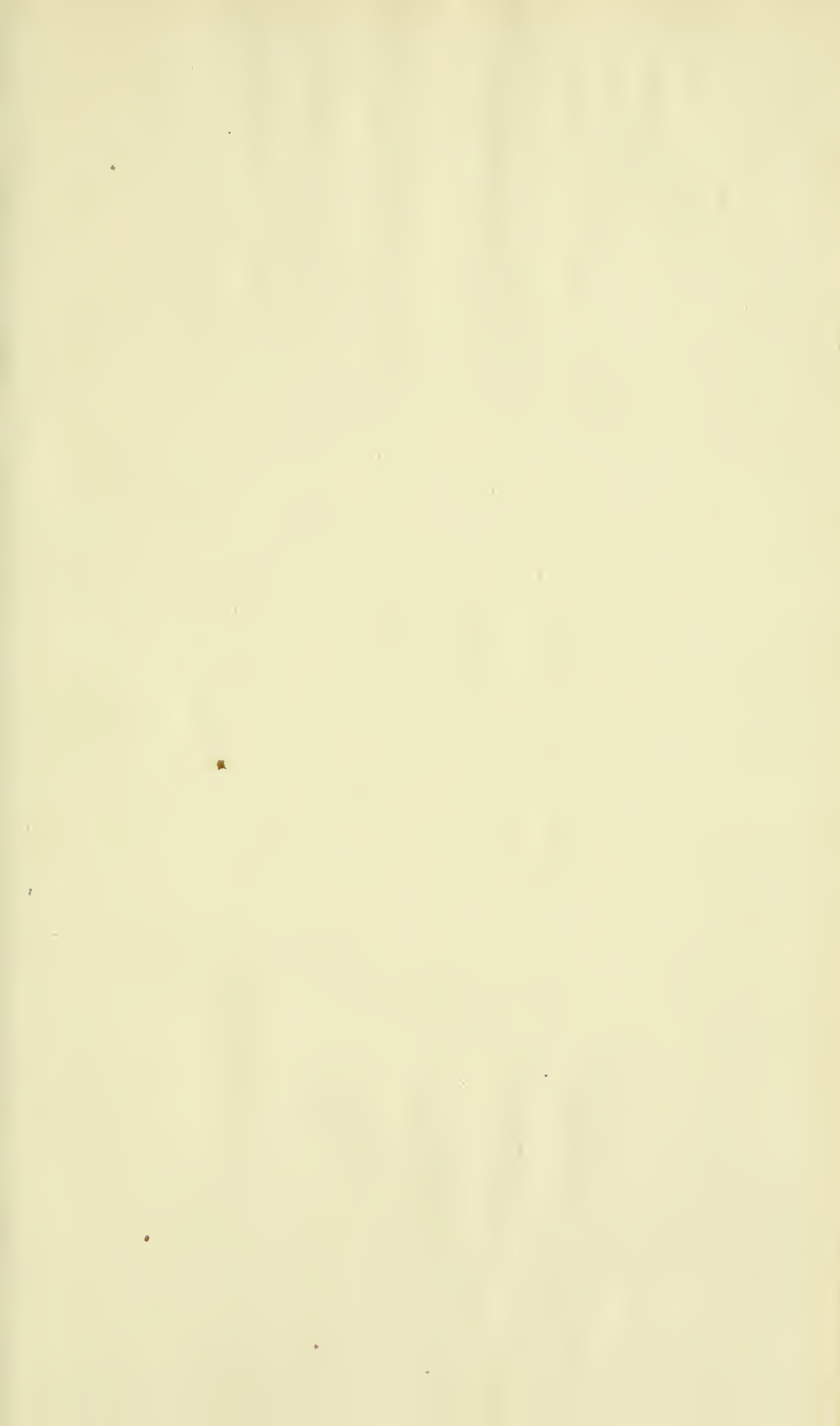
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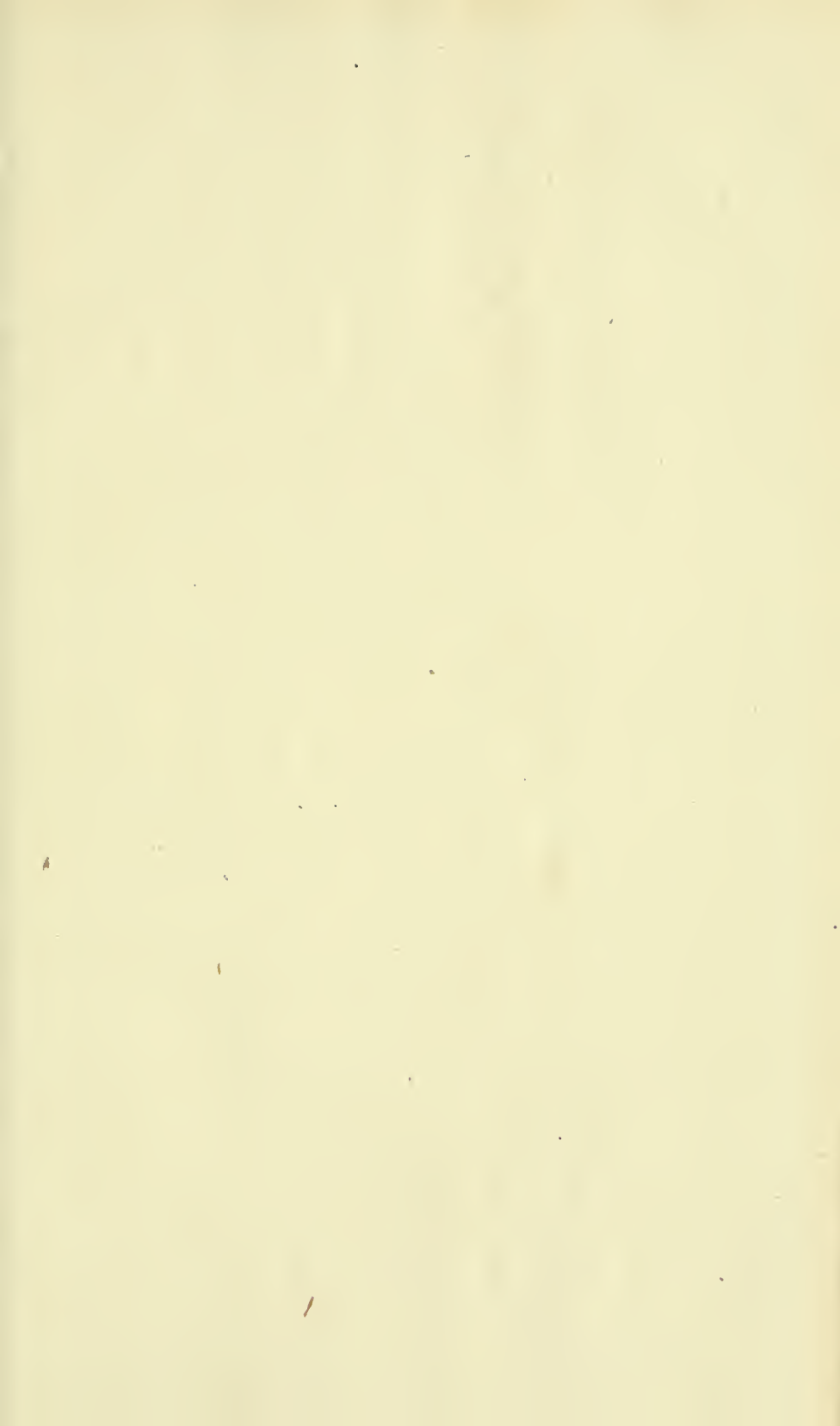




















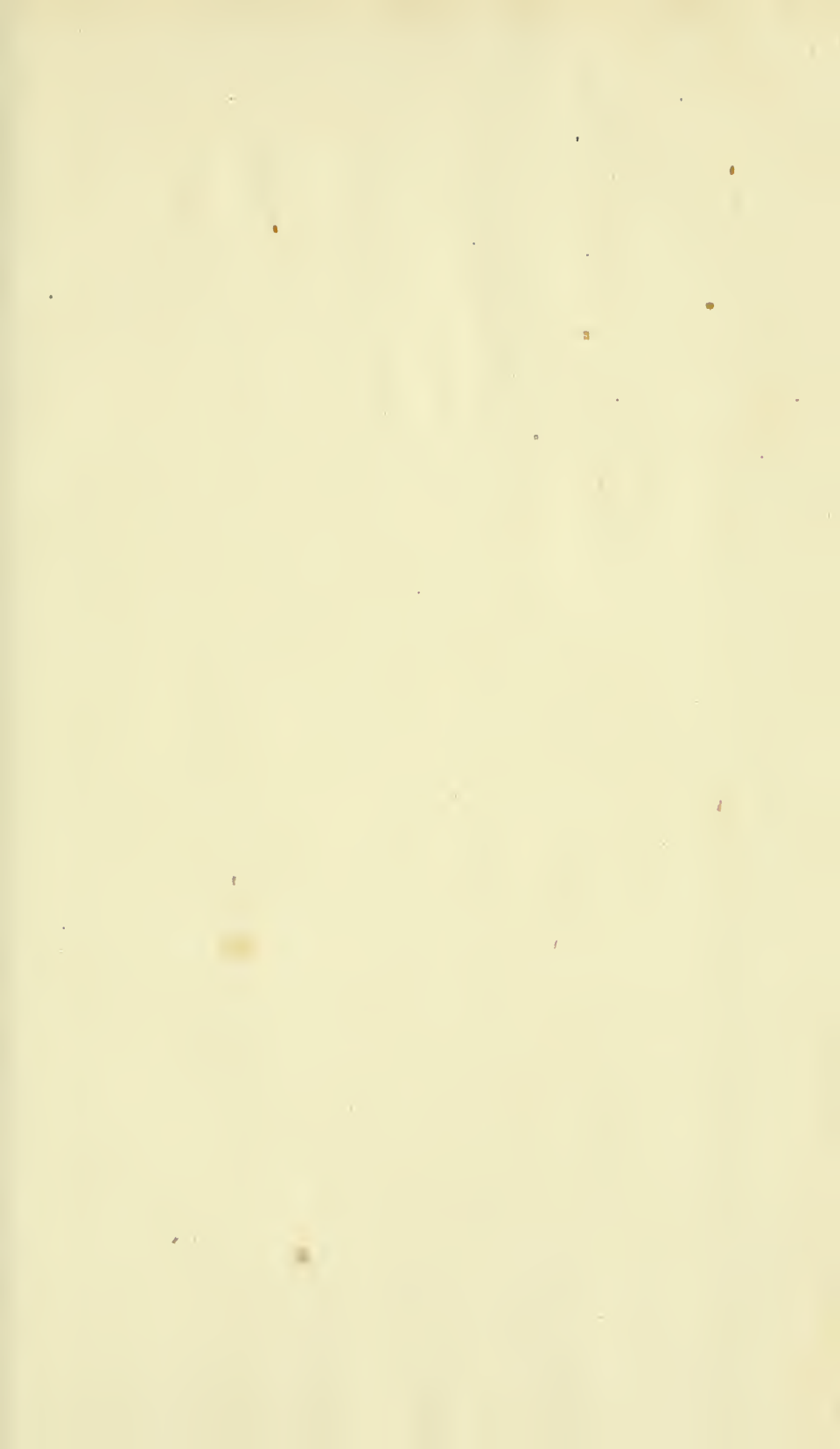




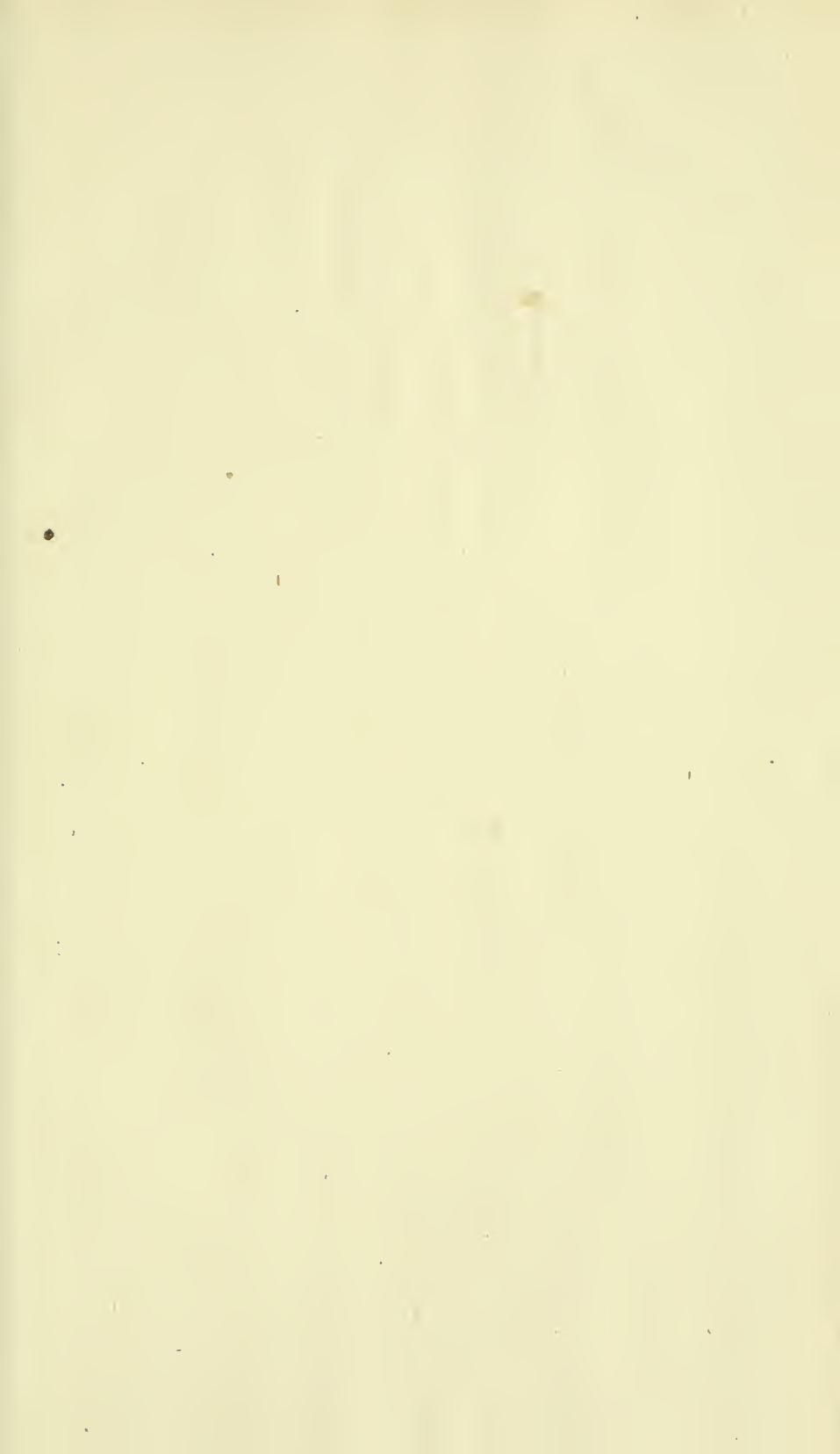










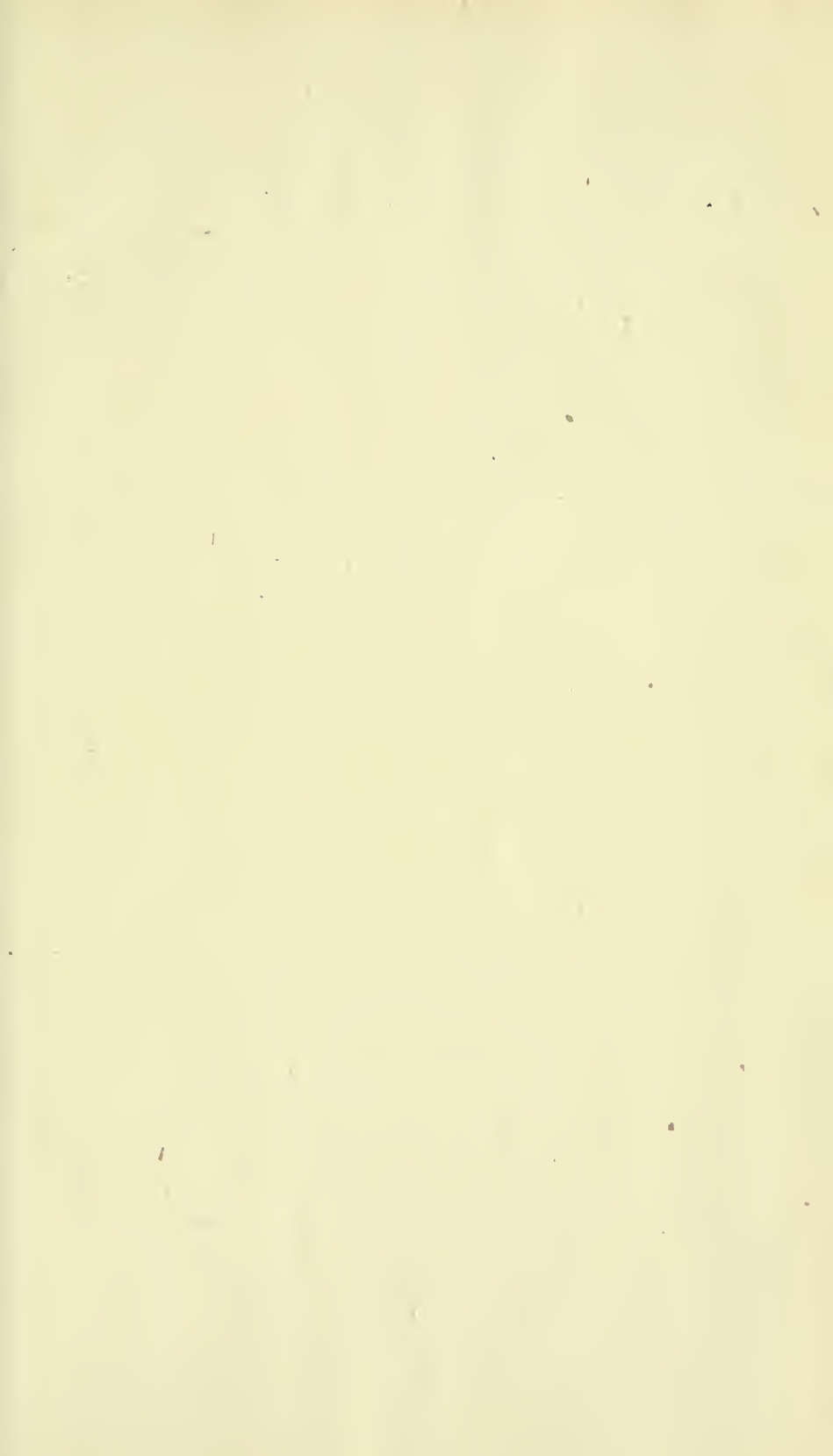












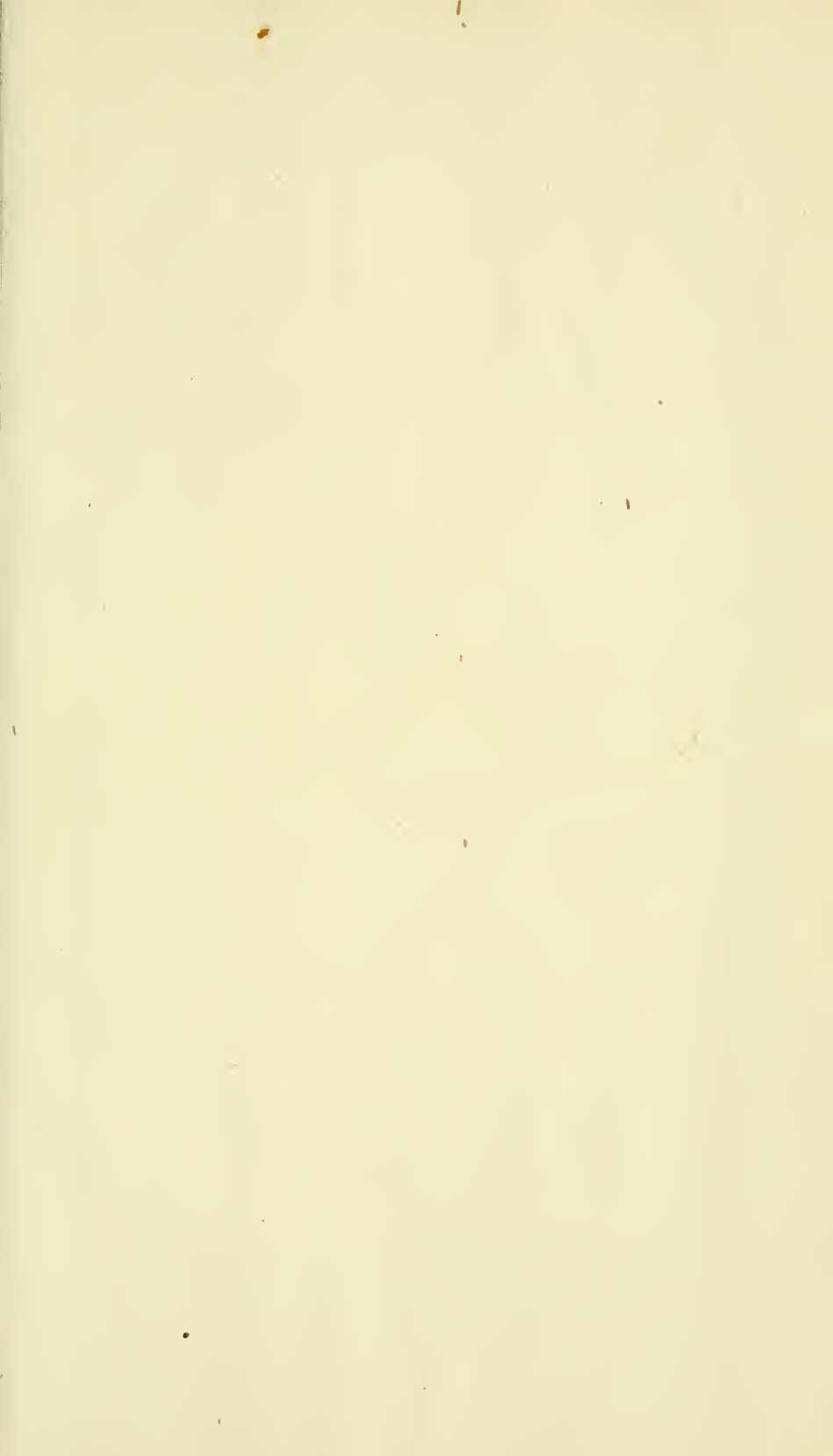














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